

Net Zero Villages Highlight Report

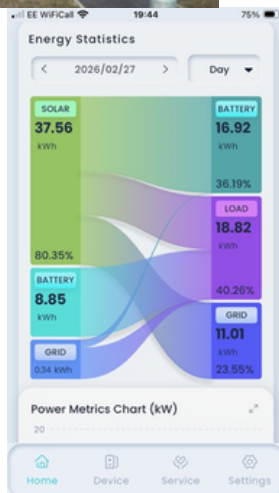
Net Zero Villages Capital Grant Scheme was made available to help rural communities across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) area. Total funding for the scheme was £1 million and was split per authority according to rural population and indicators of deprivation. Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) was awarded £285,974, a proportion used for admin.



The grant scheme was open for applications between 16th December 2024 to 26th January 2025. Grants were made available between £5,000 and £50,000 to:

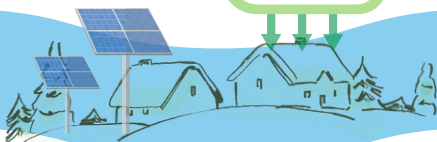
- Tackle energy use and/or support energy efficiency or generation retrofit to community buildings
- Enabling access to public transport or access to local services through low carbon transport
- Nature based solutions to tackle overheating of community buildings.

The grant was for capital projects to improve community assets and provide rural communities with the opportunity to apply a sustainable change to these assets. This also helped contribute towards the CPCA's, HDC's and Cambridgeshire's decarbonisation goals. Applicant projects had to be geographically located in Huntingdonshire. The market towns of St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon were excluded from this application as they are not rural.



The projects needed to demonstrate and measure one of the following impacts:

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Reduce energy consumption
- Reduce running costs of community facilities
- Reducing the overheating of a building
- Demonstrating that a project can be replicated
- Ensure that the community are engaged in changes of behaviour towards tackling climate change.



Applications

There were 32 applications with 11 successful applicants from around Huntingdonshire.

Bluntisham	Ramsey
Catworth	Southoe and Midloe
Fenstanton	Stilton
Great Gransden	Warboys
Great Staughton	Yaxley
Little Paxton	



Project Summaries

Bluntisham - The David Morris Community Room Solar Panels

Project awarded £7,500

- Installed solar panels to fully fund all its electricity use by buying less from the grid for the David Morris Community Room
- Delivery included solar panels, batteries and wifi to enable access to the system via an App
- Tackle energy use and/or support energy efficiency or generation retrofit to a community building.

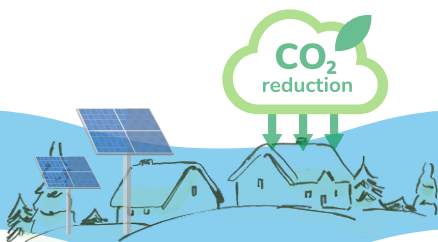
Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- Energy bills during peak summer months showed account in credit
- Providing summary savings report end 2026



Tracey Hope, Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

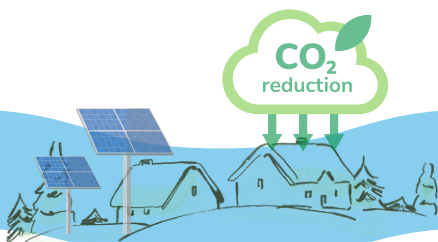
“The Net Zero Villages application process was so easy and ran so smoothly. The meetings held were useful to gather information from other organisations and to keep on track with progress of everyone’s project. The funds were awarded quickly, and Bluntisham Parish Council are so pleased with the addition of solar panels to our David Morris Community Room. While it is still early days, we are already saving money on our energy bills for this community room, which means we can offer it for hire to more community groups at a reasonable rate or free of charge.”



Bluntisham - The David Morris Community Room Solar Panels cont'd.

Mark Berg, Chairman, Bluntisham Parish Council

"The Net Zero Villages has enabled the parish council to install solar panels to our recently refurbished community room. Previously this building wasn't used and now it has been given a new lease of life without additional cost to the parish. The parish council are grateful for the grant given by Huntingdonshire District Council and I can agree with the clerk that the application process was very straight forward."



Catworth Pavilion

Project awarded £12,142.42 (£589.18 underspend repaid)

- Solar panels on Pavilion roof at the Victory Field.

Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- Anticipated 32% of the energy generated used first for electricity in building and stored in batteries. Additional remaining 68% exported to the grid
- Smart meter only fitted 5 February so too early for readings.

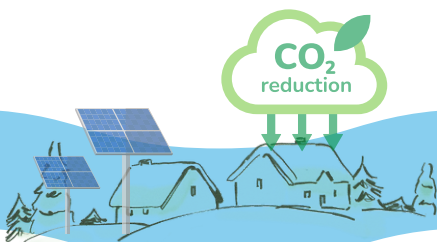


Daniel Green, Parish Councillor

"The Parish Council was delighted with how Huntingdonshire Futures supported the Playing Field Committee with this project. Their funding will have a positive impact on reducing the running costs of the playing field in the long-term as well as providing clean, green energy to run the pavilion."

Mary Matthews, Chair and Treasurer, Catworth Playing Field Committee

"I have completed a lot of grant application forms over the years and I have to say that dealing with Huntingdonshire Futures has been the best overall experience I have had. The application form was straightforward and not too onerous. The timeline set out for what had to be done when was clear, and the dates stuck to. It was incredibly helpful that the project was fully funded and that the grant money was sent through once approved so it was available to spend once an invoice came in. It has just been the most stress free process I have encountered and for that I am extremely thankful. We appreciate your support and are delighted to have delivered our completed project on time and under budget."



Fenstanton

Project awarded: £34,450

- Provision of access to sustainable public transport for 90 properties through the delivery of a shared footway-cycleway.
- Cambridge Road to High Street Fenstanton, PE28 9LQ.

Estimated Carbon Savings

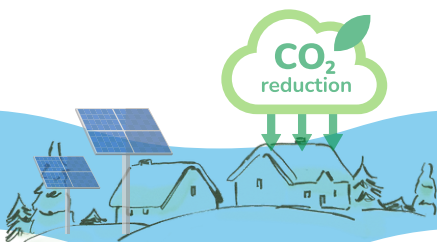
- The Connecting Fenstanton project provides access to essential services such as the village post office and retail at St Ives and Bar Hill, rather than relying on carbon intrusive car use or home deliveries.
- It will improve air quality in the medium term through reduced private vehicle congestion.



Matt Tandy, Councillor, Fenstanton Parish Council

“I’m delighted that the Connecting Fenstanton project has been delivered following a successful application to the Connecting Net Zero Villages initiative. The project will provide better connectivity to sustainable travel options and village amenities for parishioners, which is something I’m very passionate about.

Fenstanton Parish Council would like to acknowledge the support of the Net Zero Villages initiative, without whom, it would not have been possible to undertake this project. Thanks to the grant received, we have been able to provide safe access from a recent housing development to the local services and bus stops on the High Street.”



Great Gransden Reading Room and Bowls and Croquet Club

Project awarded £17,999 (underspend £5,613.13 repaid)

- Installations of 10 solar PV panels on the Bowls and Croquet Club roof connected to the electricity supply to the Reading Room and the Bowls Club
- Reading Room 10 kWh battery storage and insulation of roof space at the Bowls Club.

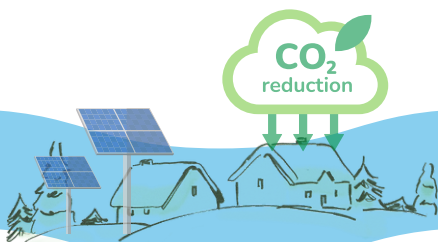
Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- Performance App will report in coming months. Display graphs chart electricity consumed from the battery, electricity exported to the National Grid and the electricity consumed from the Grid
- There will be cost savings to the Reading Room and Bowls Club. Costs are already reducing with the ability to store lower-cost night-time electricity during the winter.



Anne Constantine, Chair, Reading Room Management Committee

“At the Reading Room we greatly appreciate the support and funding from the Place and Climate Team. This grant-supported solar project will enable us to reduce our carbon footprint and save on energy bills at this vital community venue. Our weekly café and the After School and Holiday Clubs are both significant consumers of electricity, most of which will now be supplied by solar for much of the year.”



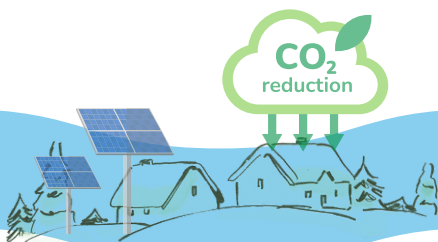
Great Gransden Reading Room and Bowls and Croquet Club cont'd.

Phil Taylor, Committee Member, Great Gransden Bowls and Croquet Club

"At the Bowls & Croquet Club the Great Gransden Solar Project has reduced our energy costs and carbon footprint to near zero, helping to secure a bright, clean future for our village. The Bowls and Croquet Club and the Reading Room together provide a range of activities for the Great Gransden, promoting our village and helping to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Thank you to Huntingdonshire Futures for providing appropriate project support throughout the planning and installation."

James Catmur, District and Parish Councillor

"I am pleased that the support provided by Huntingdonshire Futures has enabled Great Gransden Reading Room and Bowling and Croquet Club to install solar panels. This will reduce CO2 emissions and cut costs. I am proud to have suggested this successful project."



Great Staughton Village Hall

Project awarded £12,300

- Replace old boiler with electric Air Source Heat Pump
- Removal of oil tank and reliance on fossil fuels

Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- EPC rating went from E in April 2025 to B in November 2025
- Estimated CO₂ savings of 3.21CO₂e(t) (7.13CO₂e(t) to 3.92CO₂e(t) (*numbers from the Allia, UK Government Green Business Impact scheme*)

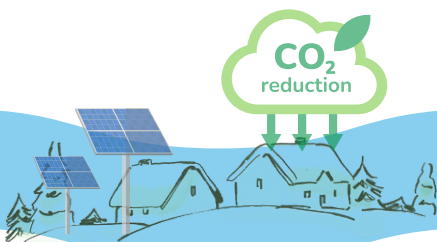


Helen Glanville, Treasurer, Great Staughton Village Hall

“Removal of Oil Tank allows us to have no need for fossil fuels in the Hall. This stops oil tankers coming in and prevents us from polluting our community.”

Bob Jewell, Chair, Great Staughton Parish Council

“Huntingdon Net Zero Villages allowed us to remove oil from our Parish asset, enabling us to reduce our CO₂ emissions and helping to educate our community for fossil fuel free heating solutions.”



Little Paxton Solar Street Lights

Project awarded £35,400

- The net zero villages grant supported the Parish Council's solar street light project
- The project delivered the supply and installation of 17 new solar 5 metre streetlights columns, lanterns & batteries
- To date the Council has installed 28 new solar streetlights and disconnected & removed 28 old electric streetlights
- Overall project completion end January 2026. With street light energy contract due for renewal by 31 March 2026. On this date there will only be 9 electric streetlights remaining and the project will be complete.

Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

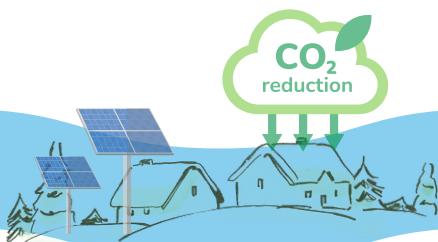
- The Council's street light energy bill has reduced from £318.75 per month to £94.18 per month, a saving of 70%.



Photo: Old light and new solar light (l-r: Cllr Jean Matheson, Parish Clerk Jenny Gellatly, Cllr Kathy Bishop, Cllr Paul Bishop, Cllr Richard Tomlinsom)

Cllr Kathy Bishop, Chairperson, Little Paxton Parish Council

“Little Paxton Parish Council is delighted to be awarded the Net Zero Villages Grant for the Parish Council Solar Street Light Project. The grant funding will enable us to replace the existing Parish Council street lights, which are over 30 years old, with new 5 meter solar street lights. The solar lights will be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly and will reduce energy costs. Furthermore, the new lights will provide safe ambient light using natural energy and will encourage more active travel in the dark evenings.”



Ramsey Pavilion Hub Solar Panels

Project awarded £38,965

- Tackling Energy Use at Yaxley Parish Council's Community Halls
- Installation of batteries and an inverter for storing solar panel energy.

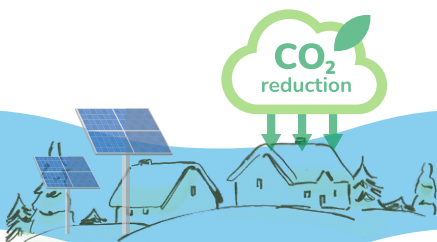
Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- The reduction in electricity bills has been the significant benefit
- The scheme has also allowed for an EV car charger on site linked to the system.



Andrew Hodgson (Charity Trustee), Ramsey Pavilion Hub

"The grant allowed us to install the most efficient solar panels on the market onto the building and have battery storage for any excess power generated. This has made a significant difference in reducing the several electricity bills for the building and making it a much more sustainable venue for the community. The project has inspired us to now have an EV charger on site and secure another grant for solar powered lighting for our car park."



Southhoe and Midloe Community Hub

Project awarded £20,027.08

- Part funding for a PV heating system combining solar photovoltaic (PV) panels with electric heating systems
- Replaces previous heating provided by a large oil boiler
- Implementing the new heating system enables 3x more usage of the building, with the Parochial Church Council and Community Hub organising community events and support services, and income generation through group usage.

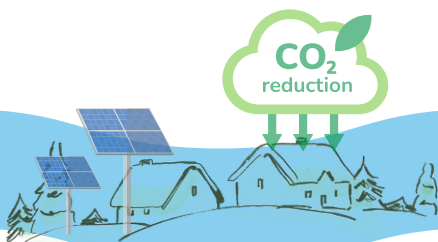
Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- Very first reading on 17 March 19.95kwh of solar produced and 19.95 kwh exported to the grid.



Angela Ellmer, Secretary, Southhoe and Midloe Community Hub Project

“We were thrilled to receive this generous grant from the Net Zero Villages Grant Scheme, which brings us a step closer to transforming our church nave into a vibrant community space for all. This funding will help us create a sustainable, welcoming hub where people can connect, learn, and support one another. We are excited about the possibilities this opens up for our village and grateful for the backing that makes this vision possible.”



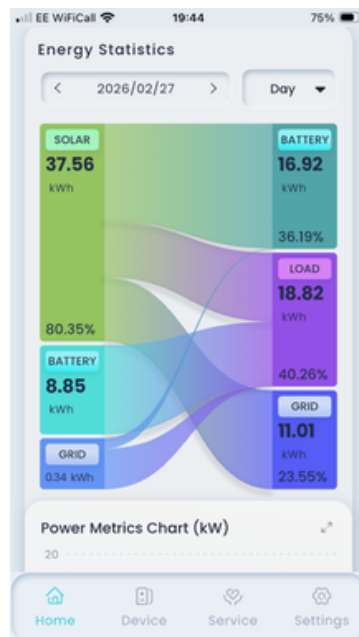
Stilton Parish Council

Project awarded £25,598.10

- Pavilion solar panels and storage batteries
- Skate Park LED bulb lighting replacement.

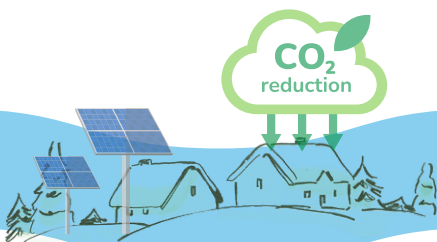
Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- CO2 savings on Pavilion of 10kg CO2/day measured by battery storage software
- Too soon to be able to fully document. Initial indication is an increase from 45% to 97%. Next EPC due February 2027
- 8 months of the year prediction to use no electricity from National Grid.
- Skate Park lighting costs reduced by approx. 30%.



John Leonard, Parish Councillor

“The addition of the battery storage system for our existing Solar PV system has improved our efficiency. Before installation 55% energy from the grid, now predicted to be 7% from the grid, for the same consumption in the building. The addition of the battery storage system to our solar PV system will increase the viability of changing our gas boilers to Heat Pumps in the future.”



Warboys Parish Council

Project awarded £35,000

- A new Community Centre build utilised the Net Zero grant award contributing to and enabling the installation of a Single VRF (Variable refrigerant flow) Heat Pump
- State-of-the-art technology will maximise energy efficiency and prevent negative impacts to the environment.

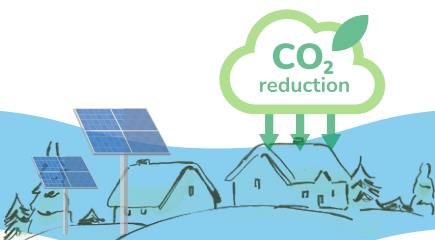
Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

- As this is a new building, monitoring and the first couple of years will be trial and error while adjusting settings to run in parallel with the solar panels.



Dr Sheila Withams, Chair, Warboys Parish Council

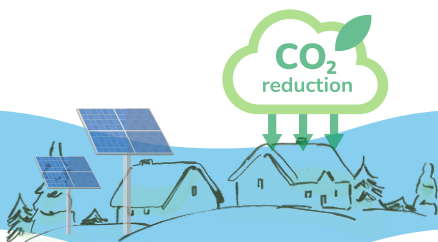
“Warboys Parish Council are delighted to be awarded the Net Zero Villages Grant. The Parish Council is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, and promotes protecting the environment, it further boasts an active environmental working group that works within the community on projects such as making available thermal imaging for identifying property heat loss. The Net Zero grant award contributed and enabled the installation of a Single VRF (Variable refrigerant flow) Heat Pump with state-of-the-art technology that will maximise energy efficiency and prevent negative impacts to the environment. The building opened 1 October 2025 and the council are monitoring the energy efficiency and next year aims to introduce a webpage dedicated to the energy efficient building.”



Warboys Parish Council cont'd.

Cllr Claire Sproats, Lead for Environment and Biodiversity

“Net Zero Villages funding has enabled Warboys Parish Council to significantly enhance the energy efficiency of our new community centre. This support allowed us to upgrade the specification of the heating and cooling system during construction, maximising energy efficiency and minimising carbon emissions. We are thrilled that our new facility now operates with far greater sustainability and long-term efficiency. This investment not only benefits our community for many years to come but furthermore showcases our commitment to the environment and our progress towards net zero.”



Yaxley Amenity Halls

Project awarded £16,995 (£255 underspend repaid)

- Tackling Energy Use at Yaxley Parish Council's Community Halls (The Amenity Centre and Queens Park Hall)
- Installation of batteries and an inverter for storing solar panel energy
- Energy savings generated by the solar panels and batteries enable the Parish Council to continue providing the halls free of charge to community groups while maintaining affordable hire rates for others.

Estimated Financial Savings and Carbon Savings

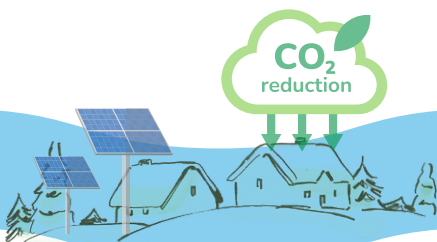
Reduction in electric bill:

- Sept 24 £266.22
- Sept 25 £105.88
- An energy bill saving of 60.2%



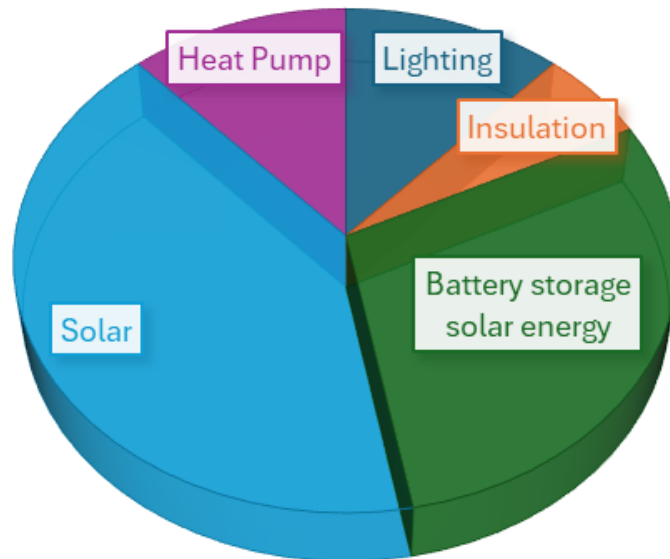
Helen Taylor, Clerk, Yaxley Parish Council

"Since installing solar batteries, our electricity costs have dropped significantly, making the running of the amenity centre far more efficient and sustainable. Solar storage has transformed our energy use - lower bills and smarter, more efficient operations across the amenity centre site."



Summary of project areas

TACKLING ENERGY USE



Plus one project enabling access to public transport

Ongoing Project Monitoring

All projects will be contacted 12 months after completion to identify cost and carbon savings generated and assess the outcomes and longer-term benefits delivered. Monitoring will focus on the extent to which projects have achieved the following objectives:

- Reduction in carbon emissions.
- Reduction in energy consumption.
- Reduction in the running costs of community facilities.
- Improved access to public transport, local services, or active and low-carbon transport options.

Projects will be asked to provide qualitative and quantitative evidence where available, including energy bills, carbon savings estimates, user feedback, case studies, and examples of behaviour change or wider community benefits.

