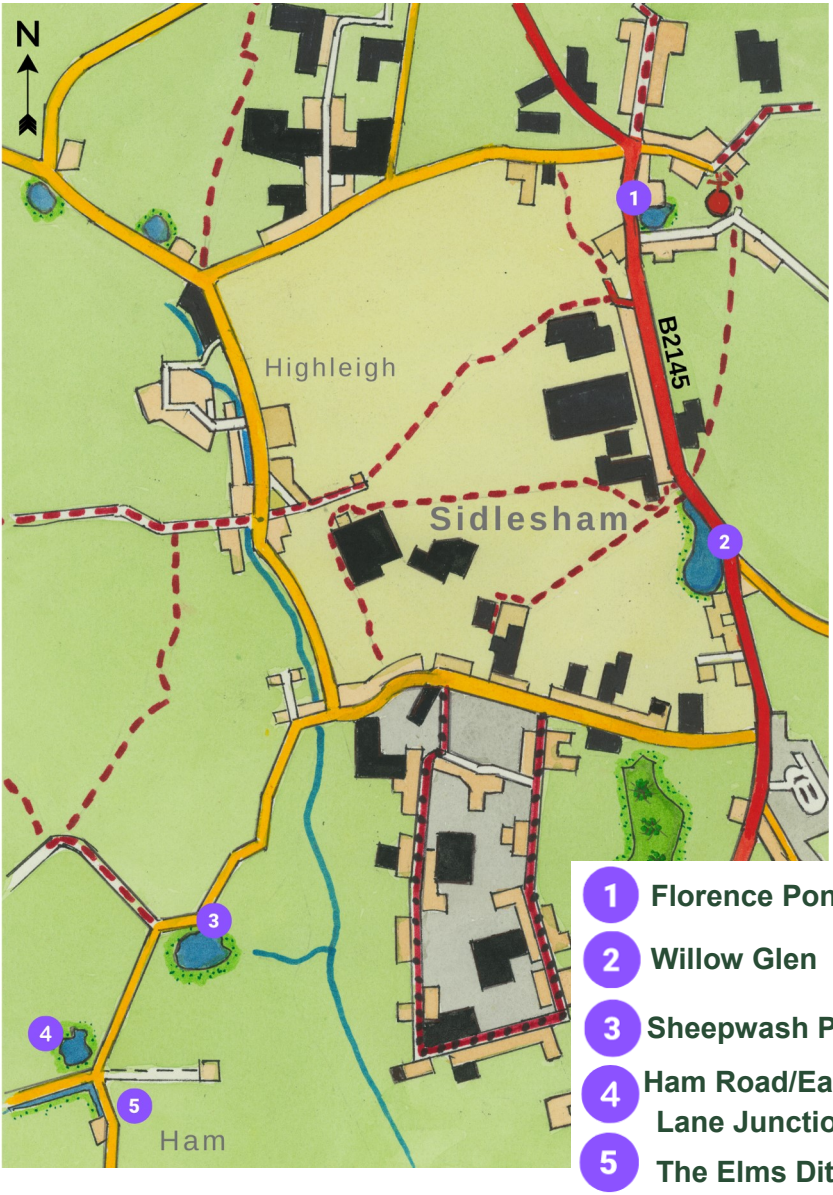
Sidlesham

This large parish is a flat, low-lying area with an extensive ditch system and relic farm ponds.



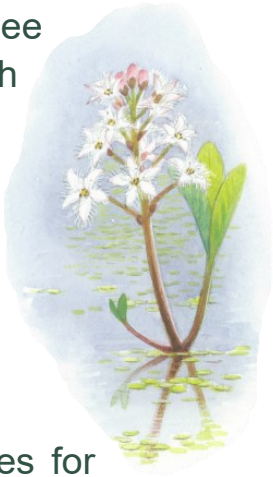
1. Florence Pond
2. Willow Glen
3. Sheepwash Pond
4. Ham Road/Easton Lane Junction Pond
5. The Elms Ditch

Public transport: Bus 51 stops along the

Florence Pond

Florence Pond lies at the heart of the village, adjacent to the village hall and near the Church of St Mary Our Lady. It was historically used by farmers for washing cart wheels

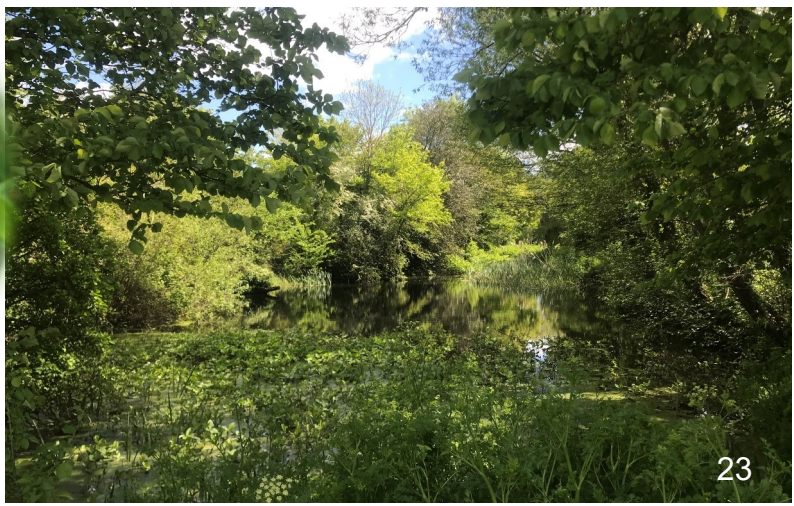
The pond is home to a colony of rare **water voles**, and it is one of the only places on the Peninsula to see the **bog bean** plant (right) which blooms with star-shaped white flowers in the spring.



The FLOW team have gently managed the vegetation in the autumn to ensure that the banks still receive lots of sunlight, encouraging a diversity of wildflowers to grow.

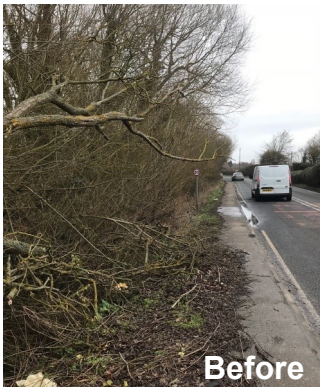
Dead wood material is piled beneath the trees for **slow worms, hedgehogs** and **short-tailed field voles**. In early summer, you might see a **bee orchid** on the banks of the pond if you are lucky!

Bee orchid

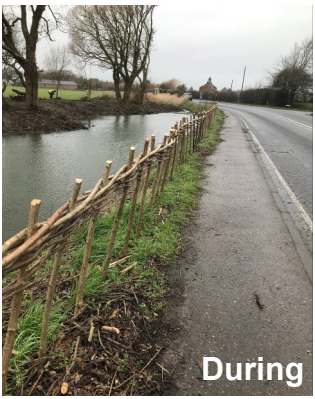


Willow Glen

This large pond was historically used by Selsey fishermen to make crab and lobster pots from the new willow growth that they cut annually.

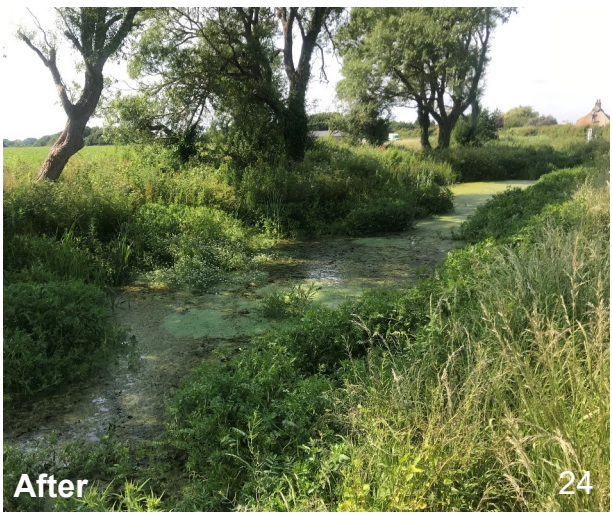

Before

However, when this tradition stopped, the pond was left unmanaged and the willow took over, along with bramble and nettle. Some willow trees were cut back and the banks were sown with native **wildflower** seed and a mix of **fruiting trees** for wildlife.


During

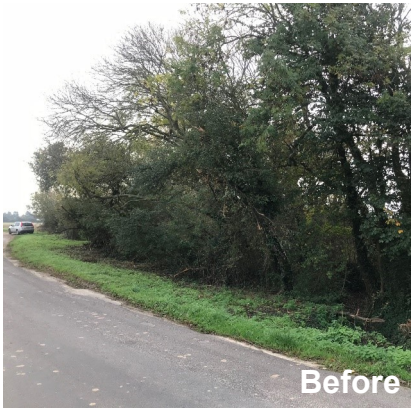
Willow Glen receives water from the very north of the parish and carries it out to sea via Pagham Harbour. The pond bed was dug deeper to carry more water after heavy rainfall and to stay wet year-round. Wetland plants such as **marsh marigold** (left) were established in the pond and the response from wildlife was immediate.

Bumblebees, **butterflies** and **birds** moved in just weeks after the works, and even **eels** were seen in the pond, where it wouldn't have been possible for them to thrive before.


After

Sheepwash Pond

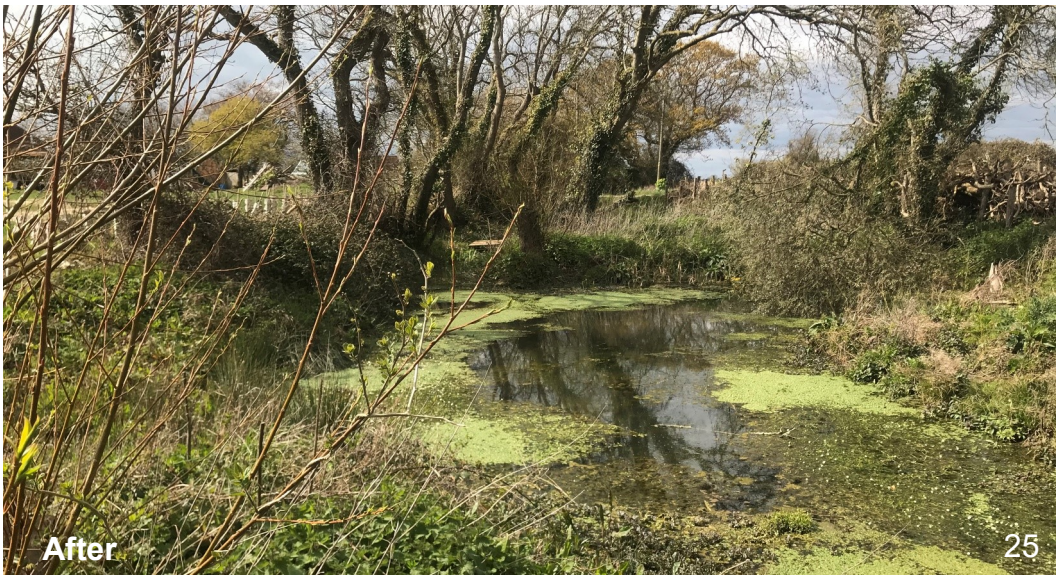
This was not a pond when the FLOW team discovered it, but a clump of willow trees. It appears on an 1846 tithe map of the parish, but it had not been managed in decades.


Before

Some mature trees had potential **bat** features—rot holes, cracks or splits—and were left alone. Other trees were gently cut back to reveal the pond.

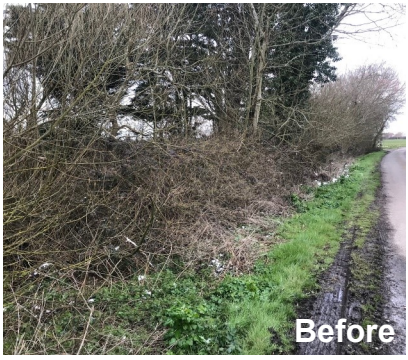
Log pile habitats were made for wildlife such as **hedgehogs** and **wood mice** (left).

Once thick bramble was reduced, a large depression in the pond was discovered. A digger was used to deepen this section, along with two adjoining ditches that carry water into the pond. The lane is now well-protected from flooding as this pond can capture lots of water after heavy rainfall.


After

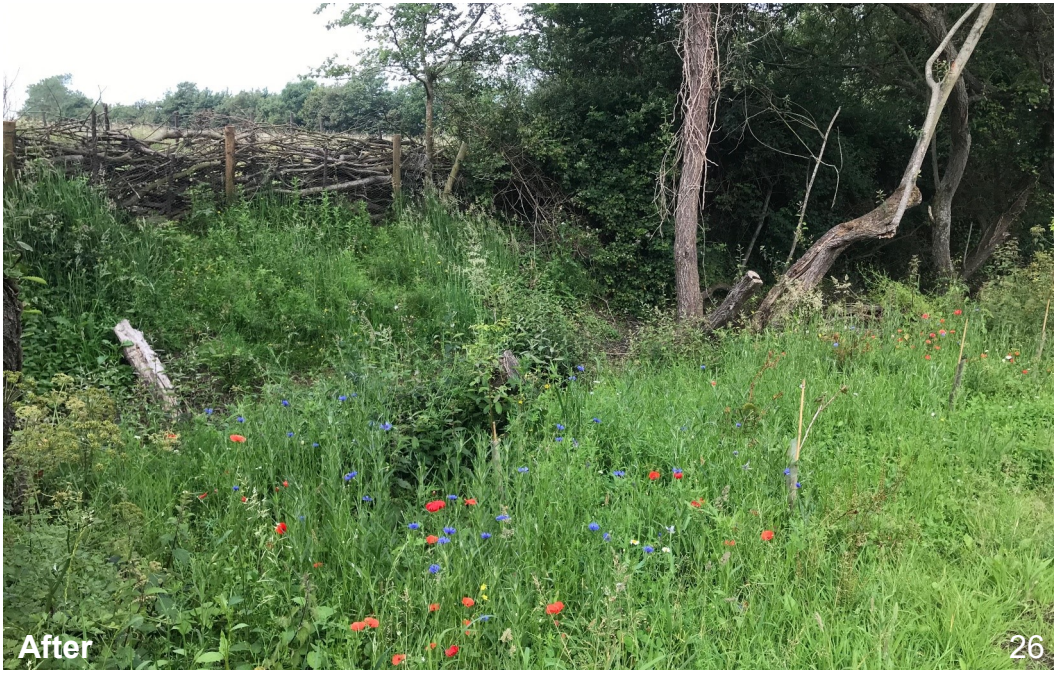
The Elms Ditch

This ditch used to be completely hidden by fallen willow trees and a thick wall of bramble.

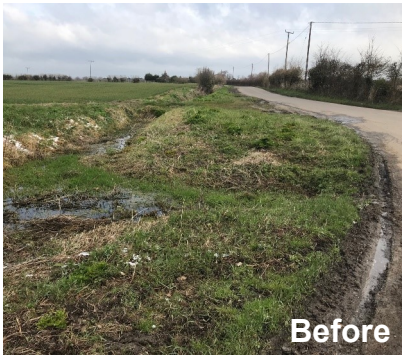

Before

FLOW volunteers, a digger and a tree surgeon removed the fallen trees and widened the ditch to allow it to hold more rain water.

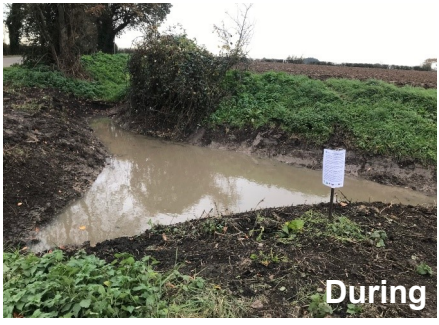
The ditch now alleviates severe flooding on the lane while providing local wildlife with fresh water, food and shelter. Wetland plants, native fruiting trees and wildflowers were established to improve local biodiversity. **Bank voles** can be heard rustling among the grasses and **roe deer** sometimes stop here for a drink.


After

Ham Road-Easton Lane Junction Pond

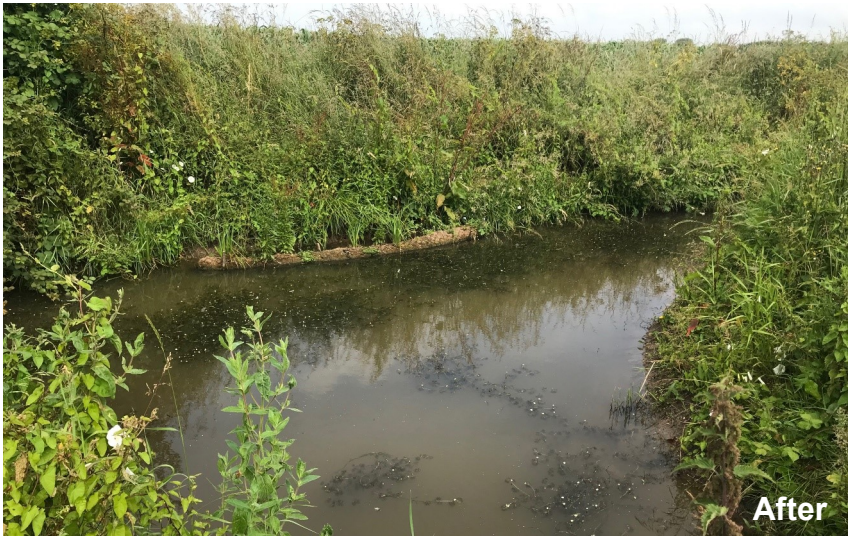

Before

This relic farm pond appears on old tithe maps of the parish. However, it was unmanaged and had become shallow. The headwall—a small retaining wall placed at the inlet or outlet of a culvert—had been badly damaged by traffic.


During

The headwall was replaced and planted over with a mix of bee and butterfly-friendly wildflower seeds, including **knapweed, cornflower, teasel, red clover** and **borage**.

The pond was dug out so it would stay wet year-round, and it was reconnected to adjacent ditches so that wildlife can move across the landscape easily along natural channels known as ‘wildlife corridors’.


After