

Alone in the Fens: Why Elm Needs a Community Hub

The largest settlement in Fenland — and the surrounding region — without a dedicated community facility

Community Facility Evidence — Full Data Tables

This document sets out the full evidence base for the assertion that Elm is the only settlement of any significant size in Fenland — and across the wider region — without a dedicated secular community facility. Information is current at May 2026.

Method

Settlements were identified from adopted or draft local plan settlement hierarchies for each district. Community facilities were confirmed through charity registers, local authority records, parish council websites, and publicly available directory sources. A facility is counted only where a dedicated secular community space — a village hall, community centre, or equivalent — has been confirmed as existing and available to the whole community on open and equal terms. Church halls and sports-only facilities are not counted unless they demonstrably serve the whole community in this way.

Population figures are drawn from the sources cited for each district; mid-2018 estimates from the Fenland Local Plan are used for Fenland settlements to enable like-for-like comparison. Elm's village settlement population of approximately 1,690 (mid-2018 estimate, Fenland Local Plan) is used throughout this evidence document. The parish population of 2,363 (2021 census, Diocese of Ely Deanery Maps) is noted separately.

Fenland District (Home Authority)

Source: Fenland District Council Draft Local Plan, August 2022 (mid-2018 village population estimates). Every settlement with a recorded population above 130 persons has a dedicated secular community facility — except Elm. At 1,690 persons, Elm is thirteen times larger than the largest settlement in the district without one. Elm row highlighted.

Village	Est. pop. (mid-2018)	Tier	Named facility	Address / notes
Manea [F1]	2,650	Large	Manea Village Hall	School Lane, PE15 0JN. Charity reg. 300411
Doddington [F2]	2,340	Large	Doddington Village Hall + Church Rooms	Benwick Road, PE15 0TG
Leverington [F3]	2,070	Medium	Leverington Village Hall	Gorefield Road, PE13 5AS. Built 1914; refurb 2021
Wimblington [F4]	1,750	Large	Wimblington Parish Hall	Addison Road, PE15 0QT. Built 1905; refurb 2021
ELM [F5]	1,690	Medium	(none)	No dedicated secular facility
Friday Bridge [F6]	1,320	Medium	Tower Hall	March Road, PE14 0HA. Charity reg. 275867
Gorefield [F7]	n/s	Medium	Gorefield Community Hall & Sports Pavilion	Wolf Lane, PE13 4NE
Parson Drove [F8]	n/s	Medium	Parson Drove Village Hall	63 Main Road, PE13 4LA. Charity reg. 1084192
Benwick [F9]	n/s	Medium	Benwick Village Hall	High Street, PE15 0XG. Charity reg. 298319
Wisbech St Mary [F10]	n/s	Medium	Wisbech St Mary Community Centre	Beechings Close
Murrow [F11]	950	Sm. A	Murrow Village Hall	19 Murrow Bank, PE13 4HB
Eastrea [F12]	750	Sm. A	Eastrea Centre	2 Roman Gardens, PE7 2DF. Opened 2013. Charity reg. 1040578
Tydd St Giles [F13]	660	Sm. A	Tydd St Giles Community Centre & Rec Ground	Broad Drove East
Guyhirn [F14]	570	Sm. A	Guyhirn Community Centre	High Road
Christchurch [F15]	510	Sm. A	Christchurch Community Centre	Upwell Road, PE14 9LL. Charity reg. 1010290
Newton [F16]	420	Sm. B	Newton Village Hall	Church Lane, PE13 5HF
Coldham [F17]	130	Sm. B	(none confirmed)	Population below 150-person threshold
Ring's End [F17]	110	Sm. B	(none confirmed)	Population below 150-person threshold
Tholomas Drove [F17]	70	Sm. B	(none confirmed)	Population below 150-person threshold
Collett's Bridge [F17]	60	Sm. B	(none confirmed)	Population below 150-person threshold

Source: fenland.gov.uk/newlocalplan

South Cambridgeshire District

Source: South Cambridgeshire Community Facilities Study 2025 (Cambridgeshire ACRE / SCDC), which physically audited 93 facilities across 84 parishes. Four parishes lack a facility; all four are substantially smaller than Elm. The largest has a population of approximately 726 — less than half of Elm's.

Village	Population (2021)	Tier	Named facility	Address / notes
Cambourne	10,286	Town	The Cambourne Hub + Blue Space + Sports Centre	Multiple facilities. Town Council managed.
Histon & Impington	~8,193	Rural Centre	Histon & Impington Village Hall	New Road, CB24 9LT
Sawston	7,691	Rural Centre	Sawston Community Hub + Marven Centre	Hub opened 2022. Two facilities.
Linton	7,234	Minor RC	Linton Village Hall + Cathodeon Centre	High Street, CB21 4HS. Two facilities.
Waterbeach	6,711	Minor RC	Tillage Hall + Community Centre	Station Road, CB25 9HT. Two facilities.
Cottenham	~6,095	Minor RC	Cottenham Village Hall + Community Centre	New VH opened 2021.
Melbourn	~4,689	Minor RC	All Saints Community Hall + Vicarage Close Hall	All Saints built 2008.
Willingham	~4,015	Minor RC	Ploughman Hall + Public Hall	Public Hall dates from 1896.
Gamlingay	3,247	Minor RC	Gamlingay Eco Hub + Village Hall	Award-winning low-carbon facility.
Haddenham	3,438	Minor RC	Arkenstall Village Centre	arkenstallcentre.org.uk
Papworth Everard	3,829	Minor RC	Papworth Everard Village Hall	Built 1926; refurb 2015.
Elsworth	~726	Group Village	(none)	Explicitly named in SCDC CFS 2025 as lacking a facility.
Babraham	~276	Group Village	(none)	Explicitly named in SCDC CFS 2025 as lacking a facility.
Carlton	~166	Infill Village	(none)	Explicitly named in SCDC CFS 2025 as lacking a facility.
Heydon	small	Infill Village	(none)	Explicitly named in SCDC CFS 2025 as lacking a facility.

Source: consultations.greatercambridgeplanning.org/sites/gcp/files/2025-05/EBGCLPSCCFMAY25v1MAY25.pdf

East Cambridgeshire District

Source: individual research. Every settlement in the district hierarchy has a confirmed facility. The smallest confirmed has a population of approximately 400 — less than a quarter of Elm's.

Village	Population	Named facility	Source
Burwell	~6,309	Mandeville Hall + Community Sports Centre	burwell.co.uk; burwellsports.co.uk
Sutton	3,952	The Glebe Community Centre	sutton-pc.co.uk
Haddenham	3,438	Arkenstall Village Centre	arkenstallcentre.org.uk
Isleham	2,481	Isleham Village Hall	hallshire.com; cambsacre.org.uk
Fordham	~2,712	Victoria Hall	cambsacre.org.uk/cambridgeshire-community-hubs-network/
Bottisham	~2,199	Bottisham Village Hall	Confirmed via local sources
Witchford	2,385	Witchford Village Hall	witchford.org.uk/villagehall/
Stretham	~2,066	Stretham Parish Rooms	42 High Street, CB6 3LD
Wilburton	~921	St Peter's Village Hall	41 High Street, CB6 3RB
Mepal	976	Mepal Village Hall	School Lane, CB6 2AJ
Swaffham Prior	841	Swaffham Prior Village Hall	Confirmed via local sources
Witcham	~400	Witcham Village Hall	CB6 2LB. witchamvillagehall.org

Source: *East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)* + individual facility research.

Huntingdonshire District

Source: individual research. Every settlement in the district hierarchy has a confirmed facility. The smallest confirmed has a population of approximately 635 — less than two fifths of Elm's.

Village	Population	Named facility	Source
Yaxley	9,409	Yaxley Amenity Centre (Owen Pooley Hall + Austin Hall)	yaxleyparishcouncil.gov.uk/venues/
Brampton	6,900	Brampton Community Centre + Village Hall	brampton-cambs-pc.gov.uk
Sawtry	~5,581	Sawtry Youth & Community Centre + Old School Hall	sawtry-pc.gov.uk/communitycentre
Somersham	3,810	Somersham Victory Hall	somershamvictoryhall.com Parkhall Road, PE28 3HE
Fenstanton	~2,868	Fenstanton Village Hall	Charity reg. 1159392 9 Honey Hill, PE28 9JP
Buckden	~2,600	Buckden Village Hall	Confirmed via local sources
Kimbolton	~1,800	Kimbolton Community Centre	Confirmed via local sources
Hilton	1,052	Hilton Village Hall	hallshire.com — Grade II listed on village green
Hemingford Abbots	635	Hemingford Abbots Village Hall	High Street, PE28 9AU. Charity reg. 1078838. Built 2004.

Source: *Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036* + individual facility research.

Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN)

Source: BCKLWN Local Plan 2021–2040 (adopted March 2025), Policy LP01. Every Key Rural Service Centre has a confirmed facility. The smallest confirmed has a population of approximately 300 — less than one fifth of Elm's.

Settlement	Population	Named facility	Address / notes
Terrington St Clement	~5,000 (2011)	Terrington St Clement Village Hall	St Clement's High School grounds, PE34. 200-seat hall; licensed bar.
Clenchwarton	2,223 (2021)	Clenchwarton Memorial Hall	2 Black Horse Road, PE34 4AB. Opened 1959.
Emneth	2,879 (2021)	Emneth Central Hall	Emneth, PE14. Opened 1921.
West Walton	1,731 (2011)	West Walton Village Hall	Mill Road, PE14 7EU.
Walpole St Peter	1,804 (2011)	Walpole St Peter Parish Hall	Church Road, PE14 7NU. Charity reg. 1204468.
Marshland St James	1,209 (2011)	Marshland St James Village Hall	Smeeth Road.
Upwell and Outwell	~4,100 (2011)	Upwell Village Hall + Outwell Village Hall	Two separate halls for joint KRSC.
Terrington St John	~2,000 (est.)	Terrington St John Village Hall	Confirmed via local sources.
Heacham	4,750 (2011)	Old Friends Hall	Sunnyside (off Caley Street), PE31 7DU.
Dersingham	~2,000 (est.)	Dersingham Village Centre	83 Manor Road, PE31 6LN. Opened 2018. Charity reg. 1178462.
Snettisham	~2,500 (est.)	Snettisham Memorial Hall	snettishammemorialhall.com
Brancaster	797 (2011)	Brancaster VH + Brancaster Staithe & Deepdale VH	PE31 8AA PE31 8BZ. bsbdvh.org.uk
Burnham Market	724 (2021)	Burnham Market and Norton Village Hall	Beacon Hill Road, PE31 8ER. Charity reg. 1206715.
Grimston	2,020 (2021)	Grimston Village Hall	Cliff-en-Howe Road, Pott Row, PE32 1BY. Charity reg. 303963.
Docking	~800 (est.)	Dr WE Ripper Memorial Hall	Docking.
East Rudham	~600 (est.)	East Rudham Village Hall	School Road.
Great Massingham	963 (2021)	Great Massingham Village Hall	Station Road, PE32.
Middleton	~1,200 (est.)	Middleton Village Hall	visitwestnorfolk.com
Castle Acre	~300 (est.)	Castle Acre Village Hall	Pye's Lane, PE32 2XB.
Feltwell	~3,000 (est.)	Feltwell Village Hall	Lynn Road, Feltwell.
Stoke Ferry	~1,000 (est.)	Stoke Ferry Village Hall	Lynn Road, Stoke Ferry.
Methwold	~1,200 (est.)	Northwold Village Hall	School Lane, Northwold, IP26 5LL.
Southery	~700 (est.)	Southery Village Hall	Recreation Drive, PE38 0NB. Charity reg. 304067.

Source: BCKLWN Local Plan 2021–2040 (adopted March 2025), Policy LP01.

South Holland District, Lincolnshire

Source: South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011–2036 (adopted March 2019), Policy 2. Every Main and Minor Service Centre has a confirmed facility. The smallest confirmed for which a population estimate is available has approximately 400 residents — less than a quarter of Elm's.

Settlement	Population	Named facility	Address / notes
Holbeach	~8,800	Holbeach Community Centre + Community Hub	Fish Pond Lane, PE12 7DQ Stukeley Road.
Long Sutton	~5,500	Long Sutton Market House	9 Market Street, PE12 9DD.
Crowland	~3,500	Crowland Community Hub + Parish Room	East Street area.
Sutton Bridge	~4,200	The Curlew Centre	Memorial Park, Bridge Road, PE12 9SA. Opened 2011.
Pinchbeck	~6,200	Pinchbeck Village Hall	pinchbeck.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk
Donington	~2,300	The Ruby Hunt Centre + Community Centre	Two facilities.
Moulton	~2,000	Moulton Community Centre + Moulton Village Hall	Two facilities.
Gosberton	2,958 (2011)	Gosberton Village Hall	21 High Street, PE11 4NW.
Surfleet	1,338 (2011)	Surfleet Village Hall & Playing Field	Station Road, PE11 4DB.
Whaplode	3,505 (2011)	Whaplode Village Hall	Kirkgate, PE12 6TE.
Moulton Chapel	~950	Moulton Chapel Youth & Community Centre	moultons.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk
Cowbit	~400	Cowbit Village Hall	Confirmed as SE Lincs LP consultation venue.
Gedney Hill	~700	Gedney Hill Memorial Hall	Confirmed as SE Lincs LP consultation venue.
Weston	~900	Weston Village Hall	Small Drove, PE12 6HU. Charity reg. 1057359.
Sutton St James	~600	Sutton St James Parish Hall	SHDC rating list October 2025.
Tydd St Mary	1,047 (2011)	Tydd St Mary Playing Field & Hall	Rectory Road.
Quadring	~750	Quadring Village Hall	Confirmed via electoral and local sources.
Wigtoft	n/s	Wigtoft Village Hall	lincscommunitybuildings.org.uk
Fleet Hargate	~838 (2007)	Community Hall, Hargate Close (+ Chapel Stables Hall)	fleet.parish.lincolnshire.gov.uk (2023 agendas).

Source: South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011–2036 (adopted March 2019), Policy 2.

Regional Conclusion

Across all six areas surveyed — Fenland, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, and South Holland — no settlement of comparable size to Elm without a dedicated secular community facility has been identified. Every settlement in each district hierarchy that has reached a comparable population threshold has a facility. Elm, at 1,690 persons (mid-2018 estimate, Fenland Local Plan), stands alone.

Population figures are drawn from the sources cited; facility confirmation is based on publicly available information current at May 2026.