King's Pond Sources of Funding

Non-Grant Opportunities

1. Biodiversity Net Gain

Under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England since April 2024 (with a few exemptions) must deliver at least 10% net gain in biodiversity. BNG is calculated using a Defra system of measurement. All habitat gains must to be maintained for at least 30 years.

If a developer is unable to achieve the necessary biodiversity gain on their site, they can comply with the legislation by buying credit units for the biodiversity gain to be achieved elsewhere.

This is a potential source of funds the King's Pond project where there are potential opportunities to sell biodiversity units to developers.

In December 2023, ATC commissioned a report on BNG at King's Pond from RPS Consulting Engineers. The report confirmed the potential funds that could be raised by selling BNG credits for improvements to the site. For the river and the pond habitats on the site they estimated a total of six units. The current value of a BNG unit is around £30k. The cost of maintaining habitats for 30 years needs to be factored in.

2. The Council could choose to increase the precept to raise the funds (this could be for a limited period of a year or two).

Grant Opportunities

Several UK funding streams may support dredging or desilting King's Pond when framed as a habitat restoration, flood management, heritage, biodiversity, or water-environment project. A proposal to create a more natural river-and-pond system is likely to attract greater funding interest than dredging alone, as it delivers wider benefits including habitat creation, improved water quality, biodiversity gains, and climate resilience. Applications are strengthened by incorporating public access improvements, interpretation, educational activities, volunteer involvement, and clear plans for long-term management and sustainability.

More specifically:

A **Dredging Plus** project could be framed around:	A **River & Pond** project could be framed around:
• restoring open-water habitat • improving biodiversity • improving water quality • maintaining a spring-fed/winterbourne system • reducing sediment accumulation impacts • conserving a historic community asset	• restoring a winterbourne chalk stream through the site • Restoration of the pond • Improving biodiversity • Improving water quality • creating and improving a variety of habitats including wetlands • reducing negative impacts on the River Wey • reducing sediment accumulation

1. Community Infrastructure Levy

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge that local authorities can apply to new building projects to help fund local infrastructure. 75% of CIL is distributed by the district council ("Strategic CIL") and 25% by the town council ("Neighbourhood CIL"). The next round of bids for CIL is due in early 2027 and is either annual (strategic) or biannual (neighbourhood). Both options for King's Pond would be eligible. It is a competitive bidding process and the funds available are typically over-subscribed.

2. Environment Agency Water Environment Funding

The Environment Agency's water-environment programmes support rivers, ponds, wetlands, natural watercourses and habitat restoration projects delivered through local authorities. The current Local Water Environment Grant supports projects that restore wetland habitats and improve water bodies.

3. National Lottery Heritage Fund

King's Pond has local historical significance, so a broader heritage and conservation project could be eligible for funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Grants range from £10,000 to £10 million.

4. Water Restoration Fund-Type Schemes

The Water Restoration Fund, funded from water-company environmental penalties, specifically supported projects restoring rivers, lakes, ponds and wetlands. While the initial application round closed in 2024, it demonstrates that government funding is available for large-scale waterbody restoration projects.

A **Dredging Plus** project and a **River & Pond** project would fit well within the types of habitat restoration objectives the fund was established to support.

5. Nature Recovery and Wetland Restoration Funding

Recent government-backed nature-recovery programmes have funded wetland creation, river restoration and habitat enhancement projects across England. These programmes have included chalk-stream, wetland and floodplain restoration projects.

Because King's Pond is spring-fed and historically connected to a winterbourne system, it could potentially align with wider catchment-based biodiversity and nature-recovery objectives.

What is likely to attract funding?

Funding bodies are generally more receptive to:

- ✅ Desilting to restore biodiversity
- ✅ Restoring open water lost through sediment accumulation
- ✅ Restoring or improving a chalk stream
- ✅ Improving habitat for amphibians, dragonflies and wetland species
- ✅ Conserving a historic community asset
- ✅ Climate-change resilience and natural flood management
- ✅ Community volunteer involvement
- ✅ Sustainability

They are generally less willing to fund:

- ❌ Dredging purely for maintenance reasons
- ❌ Routine maintenance without wider environmental benefits

The King's Pond project appears to have a strong case:

It has characteristics that will strengthen applications to heritage, biodiversity and water-environment funds.

The best prospect would not be a "dredging grant" but a King's Pond Restoration Project combining desilting, habitat enhancement, biodiversity monitoring, public access improvements and heritage conservation. Such a package would be much more fundable than dredging alone.

From an environmental funding perspective, a proposal that:

- removes an impoundment and restores or improves the chalk stream
- retains a substantial open-water pond
- creates reedbeds and wetland margins
- improves biodiversity
- reduces future silt accumulation
- strengthens climate-change resilience
- improves natural flood management
- provides educational and volunteering opportunities
- includes natural history and local heritage interpretation panels and trails

would probably have a stronger grant case than "dredge the pond and leave it unchanged." Such a project would align with the objectives commonly supported by water-environment, heritage and nature-recovery funding organisations.

Which option is most likely to attract funding?

Generally, funders are most interested in projects that deliver multiple public benefits:

Project Type	Funding Potential
Simple dredging	Poor
Dredging plus habitat restoration	Moderate
River-and-pond restoration with habitat creation	Good

In all cases applications are strengthened by inclusion of educational and volunteering opportunities and community engagement including such things as nature trails and interpretation panels.

Sources

find-government-grants.service.gov.uk	Find a grant
gov.uk/government/publications	Water Restoration Fund (now closed)
heritagefund.org.uk/funding	National Lottery Heritage Grants
herefordshirewt.org/news	Hereford River City Major Project
defrafarming.blog.gov.uk	Water Restoration Fund (now closed)
gov.uk/government/news	Thousands of species set to benefit
naturalengland.blog.gov.uk	Natural England – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

Possible Funding Opportunities Found (02/10/26)

How to apply | The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Habitat and Biodiversity Grant Funding Criteria - Veolia Environmental trust

Sustainable Communities Fund - South Downs National Park Authority

Sell biodiversity units as a land manager - GOV.UK

Applicant's guide: Higher Tier Capital Grants 2026 - GOV.UK - WN7: Restoration of large water bodies

EHDC Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy

ATC Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy