

Annual Parish Meeting 2026 Amenities & Environment Committee Report.

Tiptree Heath

Tiptree Heath is a much-loved local wildlife site. The work to continue its restoration to a favourable condition has continued over the autumn and winter months. This is to reduce the birch and gorse scrub to allow the 3 types of Heather to flourish.

This year a contractor has cleared the invasive weed from the "Birkin pond" near the car park and also some of the reeds from the "Race around pond".

Much of the work has been undertaken by our willing volunteers led by a Volunteer Assistant Warden. Essex Wildlife Trust staff have overseen the work and done some of the tasks requiring machinery.

The heath is very well used all year, and the car park requires some attention. If the Parish Council allocate us a grant this year it will be used for this purpose.

Sue More. Chairman of Friends of Tiptree Heath

Thank you Everyone!

I would like to begin my report by expressing my sincere thanks to all who have contributed as a **team** to the outcomes described in the report below: the Amenities and Environment Committee: our Clerk Ross Gurney; Deputy Clerk Jill Williams: our Ground Staff, Scott Hales, Kieran Hales and Ranger Gordon Lorriane - without whom none of our open spaces and amenities would be maintained to the current very high level; Full Council who have agreed to our projects and spending.

Grove Road Playing Field

The Playing Field, with its wide ranging and challenging play equipment, continues to attract large numbers of young people and families. Some additional parking has been agreed, while further parking is being considered. A mini cycle track has been added for our younger visitors and shade sails are being researched to provide shelter in hot weather. The toilets and skate park have been subjected to vandalism and graffiti. The possibility of a mural being painted on the skate park together with measures to vandal proof the toilets are being considered.

An Arboricultural assessment report has been carried out on the Playing Field trees which will be used in conjunction with the existing Management Plan which includes areas of longer grass being left on the Playing Field Extension to increase biodiversity. The playing field is the only site owned by Tiptree Parish Council where dogs are not permitted, both for health and safety reasons and because this is an area set aside for the enjoyment of children and young people.

We were pleased to agree to and welcome the Village Fete; a family and community event held on Grove Road Playing Field last June.

Grove Lake:

In line with the Management Plan for Grove Lake the Trust for Conservation Volunteers (TCV) have undertaken scrub management around the back lake and have created a natural barrier -a dead hedge - with the spoil as a refuge and habitat for wildlife. A popular addition to seating is the bench installed in memory of Cllr Roger Manion at the front and overlooking the lake. Roger loved the Lake, so the bench is a very fitting memorial to a tireless Parish and City Councillor.

The duck feeding machine has proved a popular addition to the scenery of the Lake. Its use reduces the feeding of ducks with bread which is harmful both to the ducks and to the lake itself. Maintaining the lake is very costly, particularly the cost of silt removal.

Park Lane:

Park Lane Amenity Area and Nature Reserve continue to provide residents with a beautiful place to walk, exercise dogs and enjoy peaceful surroundings as well as encouraging a species rich habitat for wildlife. In common with all our sites, annual tasks are carried out in accordance with the Management Plan for the site together with the newly commissioned Arboricultural Assessment Report. An additional strategy of rotational management of bramble and blackthorn scrub, initiated by TCV and funded by a grant, has been added and carried out this year with the aim of preserving and increasing habitats loved by species such as amphibians, dunnock and nightingales,

Windmill Green:

Once again, the lit Christmas Tree on the Green announced the start of the Christmas Season It was eye catching!

The hedge bordering neighbouring properties has undergone renovation. A native hedge (funded by a grant) has been planted and mulched by TCV. The hedge planting, together with the adjacent longer grass, will create a wildlife habitat.

An information board has been designed and positioned on the Green. It includes the history of the site and references the management strategies aimed at encouraging wildlife and biodiversity.

Memorial Garden:

The Memorial Garden, surrounded by native hedges and planted with trees and shrubs, is a beautiful place, within walking distance of the village Centre, for the interment of ashes and for quiet and reflection.

Work to replace the sleepers edging the raised interment beds with brick is complete, together with replanting. Consideration is being given to funding renovation of the pathways with an all-weather surface.

Caxton Close:

Caxton Close Play Area and Open Space, in the centre of the Village, is a very a popular and important amenity for families. The old slide has recently been replaced with an inclusive slide unit and trampoline. It was opened very appropriately and

ceremoniously by pupils of St Luke's School, who were among the first to try the new facility. The new unit is proving to be a popular addition to the play area.

Nine Acres:

We are hopeful that the prolonged negotiations between Crest Nicholson (developers), Colchester City Council (CCC) and Tiptree Parish Council (TPC) will result soon in the transfer of the allotments and open space to TPC which will allow the Amenities and Environment Committee to move forward with its plans for a play area and for residents to finally take over their allocated allotments.

Thyme Road:

Plans to re-vitalise this play area, with a focus on the provision of accessible play equipment, have moved ahead with the agreement by TPC of funding the project from Section 106 monies released by housing development.

Warriors' Rest Woodland:

Access to the public open space was achieved in September 2025 via the housing development built by Bloor Homes off Barnbrook Lane. A Woodland Management Plan has been adopted, and initial management has taken place with a main ride and pathways being created together with stream maintenance.

PROW:

Information about the extensive network of footpaths around Tiptree can now be found on the Parish website. We are very appreciative of the fact that David Evans, David Godden and Matt Hatton continue to walk the paths and update the Committee about their condition, which is invaluable information for ensuring the paths remain open.

War Memorial:

Once again last year's hot summer created difficulties for the hard-working members of Tiptree Heath WI. who have maintained the flower beds for many years. We are indebted to them for their dedicated care. The war memorial always looks beautiful and is a fitting reminder of the debt we owe to those who have lost their lives because of war.

Tiptree Parish Council has stated that it wishes to be given the opportunity to adopt additional open space and amenities provided by successful planning applications in Tiptree, including Colchester Local Plan and our Neighbourhood Plan, rather than the now default practice of management company ownership.

Diana Webb (Chairman)