



Chairman - Bob Villa

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Newsletter February 2026

Chairmans Report

I am pleased to report that over the last year, or so significant improvements have been achieved in the reporting by GCA members of problems on the Common and the speedy implementing of necessary corrective actions by City Parks.

GCA members are assisting in the developing of the text/photos for the new noticeboards, and we are currently anticipating the delivery the proofs. It is also anticipated that Chelmsford City Council will publish an updated Galleywood Common Local Nature Reserve Management Plan, during 2026.

Bob Villa

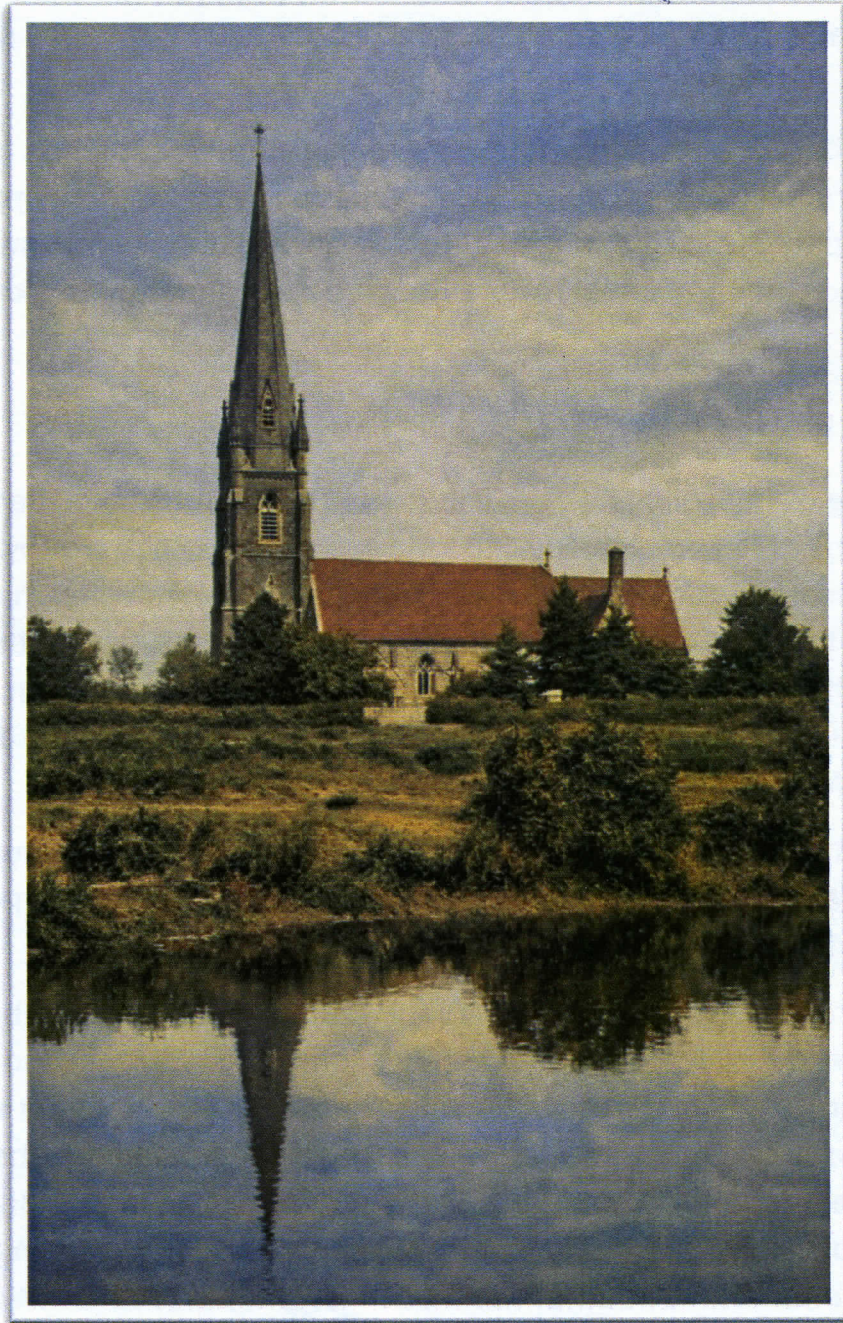
The New Notice Boards

Stimulating work delving into the volumes of GHC archives to piece together photographs of People, Horses, Historic events, Buildings, Earthworks and variety of users of our Common. The final challenge was when the CCC Parks submitted their initial draft to the printer. The final photo size of these photographs had to be at least A4! The original photos were most Post Card size or smaller, black and white, or even bromide prints, and the definition well below par for printing

It occurred to me that in late Victorian and Edwardian times pictures were, for the most part, in black and white, and the sky light grey. But The people could of see in full colour!

After experimenting using AI it was found that each photo could be enhanced, scratches etc. removed, and the result Colorized (a US term used by ChatGPT). The Mill Pond, taken c1910 is a typical colorized image. Note the size of the pond, reportedly supporting a sizable fish population, and the absence of trees outside the church yard boundary. This pond is now, at best, a large shallow puddle supporting marginal grasses and scrub, and the remaining area with the remaining area self-sowed trees and bushes. There is record of a Great Crested

Newt and a Spined ^LRoach found during the Galleywood Parish Council Greening Galleywood Project survey work in 2008/9.





This Muntjac deer stayed away from the herd roaming Gallywood Common and surrounding wooded areas finishing up in Galleywood Road not far from Running Mare.

Chelmsford City Council have a free dead animal collection service –

<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/environment-and-public-health/street-problem-report/report-a-dead-animal/>

John Turkentine

Warden Report



Cowslips



Speckled Wood Butterfly



My apologies to John Ladler for not including his photos in earlier Newsletters, but since Spring is on its way. Why not take more photos and comments for inclusion in the next Newsletter?

John Turkentine

Galleywood Common Events

Here are the photos I mentioned. Old B & W from 1978, the coloured one of the Hunt in 1979.

"In earlier years the Boxing Day Hunt was a traditional fox hunting event starting from the Horse and Groom Public House. As time went by the event became a trail until this also ceased".



Susan Wilson

Diary Dates – Thursday 2nd April 2026 – AGM in The Keene Hall at 7.30PM

'It's all about Heather'

Galleywood Common Local Nature Reserve is a truly special place for lowland heath, with beautiful heather and heath species.

Over the past six months, since our last newsletter, we've been busy across several areas of the common. Focusing on maintaining and restoring our precious heather habitats. With support from a number of business volunteer teams, we've been cutting and clearing invasive gorse. The invasive gorse's stumps are then treated by the head park ranger to prevent regrowth, helping us protect the open heathland that heather needs to thrive.



All the removed gorse is taken off-site and composted. We're already seeing encouraging signs: heather patches are strengthening year by year. Even the small area beside one of the car parks continues to expand naturally. - each year we clear the edges, allowing the heather seeds to settle and grow from the exposed soil (see images).



We also work on managing the bracken, with both business teams and our dedicated Galleywood Common volunteers, using bracken bruising techniques to keep it under control (see images).



Some three years ago, following advice from the Tiptree Heath Warden, we carried out a small soil scrape on the common. For a long time, we saw no heather returning. But late last summer (year three) we spotted smaller heather seedlings emerging at last. This is fantastic news and a wonderful reminder that, although heather can be lost, with the right management it can regenerate. We'll now hand-weed the area to prevent young gorse from taking over.

This year we'll continue with our heather restoration and bracken management work with support of the Galleywood Common volunteers and our business team days. If you'd like to join us, please use the contact form on our Love Your Chelmsford website.

We're also pleased to have the Essex Field Club continuing their survey work on the common. Their expert input helps us better understand the site and its species, informs our management plans, and shows us where we are making a positive impact.

Alongside the heathland work, we've also completed several smaller tasks across the site, including seat repairs, bridge repairs, and the ongoing replacement or refixing of signs. If you spot anything that needs attention, please let us know using the contact form on the Love Your Chelmsford website and we will investigate.