

Statement by Friends of St Thomas Park July 2026

The Friends of St Thomas Park represent around 70 residents in Coleridge ward who came together in 2023 to raise their concerns about the way the Council was proceeding at that time with its plans to develop housing on a semi-derelict garage site and a significant part of St Thomas's Park.

The July 2026 Cabinet paper on the small sites development programme refers to the plans to develop the site at St Thomas's in Coleridge ward as having been 'paused' but are now being reactivated. No plan is included with the St Thomas site item but the report refers in a number of places to the proposed development being likely to have an impact upon the park area.

St Thomas Park

St Thomas Park is just over an acre in size, located behind and overlooked by two storey housing. It is largely open with a central fenced area with children's play equipment in it. It is well used for active recreation, play, football, ball throwing, dog walking etc. The seventy people, children and dogs who turned out for the photograph and who signed the E-petition in 2023 value it.

The park is a protected open space in Coleridge ward (through the Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan). Coleridge is a ward that is deficient in open space when measured against the council's own standards for open space provision across the city.

Since 2023 a Friends group has been formed and a celebration event was held in summer 2024 to mark 75 years since the park was created.

A master plan for the park has been prepared by the Friends Group and surveys of birds, bats and biodiversity have been undertaken by local residents. New biodiversity features supporting growth in pollinators have

been constructed. In early 2026 new trees were provided by the Council's Tree team and a tree planting event was held with local councillors and residents. This work has all been undertaken with the support of the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and local members.

What is Cabinet being asked?

The semi-derelict garage site adjacent to St Thomas Park is a brownfield site and its redevelopment to provide a small scale housing scheme makes sense.

That said, St Thomas park is a protected open space, in a ward that has a deficit of open space areas. The park is valued for its recreation and play contribution, it supports local biodiversity and the community has come together and continues to demonstrate its value and importance to them.

Cabinet is asked to confirm the continued importance of St Thomas Park and support the work being undertaken there by ward members, council officers and local residents. Ongoing support for this important piece of local green space (consistent with the councils own policies) can best be achieved if it is moved to the Nature, Open spaces and City Services portfolio and any future development of the garage site be undertaken on the brownfield area only.

Friends of St Thomas Park

July 2026