



Green Flag for CTW

By Diana Cormack

Cherry Tree Wood has been identified as one of the parks that will benefit under Barnet Council's new 'Premier Parks Strategy'. Cabinet members have backed a scheme whereby sixteen parks are to get premier league treatment, with their quality being measured against a national *Green Flag* standard, similar to the *Blue Flag* award scheme used on public beaches.

The chosen parks will be subject to a five-year improvement plan destined to "ensure they are attractive, accessible, well maintained and offer a wide range of facilities". Due to be in place this month, these plans will initially concentrate on essential repairs, followed by such things as improvements to park entrances, horticulture, disabled access, park furniture and play facilities.

The safety of park users will also be a priority, so all park keepers and ground maintenance staff will be regularly and clearly visible in their uniforms and will have received customer care training. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour will be monitored and, where



This should be more convenient for all park users next year. Picture by John Dearing

there is a need and appropriate funding, CCTV will be considered.

Leasing buildings

Where there are suitable buildings, every effort will be made to lease them to cafes or organisations such as play and youth groups, which brings the new kiosk and the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood to mind. At the time of writing, someone has been accepted to take over the lease of the kiosk, but the opening is being delayed by legal technicalities. Barnet Green Spaces say that it will open as soon as possible.

They also say that the pavilion will not be pulled down, but hope to re-vamp it, perhaps to be used by young people's groups.

This all depends on funding, as does the refurbishment of the children's playground, so any improvement will be on hold until the money is available. Similarly, the toilets next to the tennis courts need to be upgraded for use by the disabled and this is in the pipeline for next year.

It seems that funding will focus on the premier parks, with less money going to the 200 other parks not given this rating. When any significant improvements to our park will occur remains to be seen; the chairman of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood has said that no matter what the intentions are, it always comes down to money in the end.

Six terms

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Unions' views

Speaking nationally, Unison – the local government union – considers that any change should take place only on a regional basis. The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers says that any change must be negotiated nationally, and there should be "no piecemeal changes in individual LEAs". The National Union of Teachers says that "there are wholly insufficient reasons to change".

Wide consultation

What do the people of Barnet think? 58,000 questionnaires were sent out this summer – not only to schools, but to care establishments, childminders, businesses, diocesan authorities, neighbouring LEAs and religious groups. The Council says that details were also available on the Barnet website and in libraries. 7,516 (about 13%) were returned.

No change can happen until 2006–7, because the terms are already set until then. A Barnet spokesperson told *THE ARCHER* that Chief Officers of neighbouring boroughs are in constant contact, but this is a very complex issue.

THE ARCHER would like to know what East Finchley thinks.

A bunch of buses

By Daphne Chamberlain

"It's not the number of buses we're concerned about – it's their reliability." East Finchley Bus Watch was working on its second survey of the 143 and 263 buses last month, and group organiser Hazel Burnett considers that the results are confirming what many people suspected.

Intervals of 25 minutes and more between some buses alternate with bunches of buses close together, and others running reasonably. The average wait works out as quite acceptable, but the bus user arriving at their stop never knows whether they will wait for a short, average or long time.

In this second survey, Bus Watch has picked out different days each week, with members

on a rota system 'on duty' from 8am to 10pm. (The standard shift is one hour, and survey points have seats!) Both routes are timed in each direction.

At the end of each survey month, results are analysed and sent to Transport for London, but Hazel is sending off details of any bad waiting times immediately, with a request for an explanation.

If you would like to join, call 020 8444 6824.

Public CSAZ Meeting

A meeting of the Community Safety Action Zone (CSAZ) is to take place on 21 September at the Old Barn Community Centre, Tarling Road from 7pm to 9pm.

This is a Public Meeting for the Police to explain about the Community Safety Action Zone, and for members of the public to ask questions. Chief Superintendent Ricketts, along with all police and council people involved, will be there.

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