



Café up for grabs again

At the beginning of May some of the borough's free weekly newspapers carried a notice from Barnet Council about the café premises in Cherry Tree Wood. It stated that the council was proposing to grant a lease of the kiosk and seating area and advised that any written representations about this should be submitted by 31 May.

At the time of writing, the café is being run by the tenants who took it over last year and is open every day from 10am to 5 or 6pm.



A pleasant place to meet and eat. Photo by Diana Cormack

We must protect Cherry Tree Wood before it's too late

The loss of Cherry Tree Wood's park keeper has stirred a passionate response from readers of *THE ARCHER*. There are fears that the park could decline rapidly unless the park keeper is restored and money is found to improve areas that are already run-down. Here's a letter from one reader that seems to sum up these concerns.

Dear Editor,

I moved to East Finchley last October, discovered Cherry Tree Wood and walk there nearly every day. Most of the walkways have been left to crumble away and are a hazard to anyone over 35 and a half.

Overflowing waste bins, none in or near enough to the tennis and basketball courts, so paper, plastic bottles and general detritus abound. Several benches are rotten, splintered and abandoned. Brambles and undergrowth are good but having too many looks like the Somme on a bad day.

When I went on 23 April a party had barbecued on the rise near the tube line and had managed to set fire to a tree trunk. Remains of the meal were scattered, plastic carrier bags and several red plastic or paper plates discarded at the picnic and elsewhere. Are you really allowed to make fires in this area? Other delights: two condoms and a miniscule under-garment hanging from a branch ... just a thong at twilight when the lights are low?

Point is this: it's a splendid space or could be and has the potential for all sorts of interest-

ing activities. But the general air of neglect makes me wonder if whoever is responsible might be considering letting it slide into disarray until shove comes to putsch and it becomes a nice place for a developer. I'm sure Tesco would be interested.

Barnet Council doesn't seem very interested in doing much. At the moment, there are so many cut and fallen trunks and branches that it looks like an unkempt timber merchant's yard. Are there any plans for fresh plantings?

And to make insult more injurious the authorities have withdrawn whoever it was who kept a watchful eye with the loss of Cherry Tree's park keeper. What is Barnet's responsibility? Does the area come under the auspices of the Corporation of London and might they be able to help?

It's time for those who have any interest at all in the environment to stand up and be counted. I imagine the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood could do with some support. Use it or lose it.

Yours faithfully,
Harry Greenberg,
Diploma Avenue, N2.

Logs set alight by vandals

Houses that back onto Cherry Tree Wood have long been subjected to nocturnal noises from the park, whether or not the gates have been locked. Screams and shouts emanating from unseen revelers have become par for the course.

Lately, however, a new and more dangerous activity is taking place, one that is damaging to the grass and could feasibly spread to other areas. Fires are being lit, sometimes using the logs that have been left around to encourage insects and other wildlife.

This is beginning to happen in the daytime too. Sometimes it is sheer vandalism (one Fordington Road resident told *THE ARCHER* he had seen a group trying to set fire to the base of an oak tree) while sometimes people are making barbecues.

As the main gates nowadays are usually left wide open, cars with music blaring have been cruising onto the pathways late into the evening, as reported by a resident of Cherry Tree Road, who had also seen daytime picnickers driving in. A motorcyclist has also been seen driving around inside the gates.

There is a fear in some quarters that, with Cherry Tree Wood being so accessible, it could be possible that travellers might find it a suitable place to park their caravans.



Caption: Remains of an overnight fire. Photo by Diana Cormack

Groups to benefit from community cash

Projects to enhance the quality of life in Barnet will soon be benefiting from thousands of pounds in grant funding from Barnet's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The LSP has nearly £470,000 of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) cash to distribute to statutory organisations like the council or Primary Care Trust (PCT), or voluntary and community groups, who have ideas for improving the more deprived areas of the borough. LSP chiefs are hoping to receive proposals for projects costing upwards of £50,000 but will also consider smaller bids. NRF money is aimed at narrowing the gap between the most deprived areas and the rest of the UK.

Reaching young people

This year, the emphasis is on projects which will have a significant impact on children and young people, and preferably involve young people in their design and delivery.

This round of funding comes only five months after the LSP distributed just over £120,000 of NRF money to 14 community groups, for mainly environmentally-themed projects. Councillor Mike Freer, Chairman of the LSP Executive and Leader of Barnet Council, said: "Nearly half a million pounds is available for projects to improve the quality of life in Barnet, which is great news for people living, working in and visiting the borough. We want to help deliver some lasting and sustainable projects which will make a real difference to people in Barnet, especially the younger generation." The closing date for entries was 11 May and proposed projects need to be completed by 31 March 2008.

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