



Going, going, gone: Walkers duck beneath the leaning tree at the entrance to Cherry Tree Wood; council workers go in for the chop; the shorn trunks left behind. Photos Mike Coles

Cruellest cut for the 'limbo' tree of Cherry Tree Wood

By Diana Cormack

For many years the High Road entrance to Cherry Tree Wood has had the added attraction of a canopy arching over the footpath. This was provided by two boughs of a mature Hornbeam tree growing at the edge of the path on the High Road side.

Gradually these have been getting lower and lower, presumably with their weight pulling the trunk and the rest of the

tree down at an awkward angle, and leading to a risk of the tree uprooting altogether.

Eventually the low branches

became a danger to park users and were the subject of many

comments in the East Finchley community Facebook group including jokes about having to limbo under them.

The situation was reported to Barnet Council. While many

hoped the tree could have been propped up in some way and the branches preserved, they were sawn off in mid-March, leaving what some feel is a rather stark result.

Park gates to stay locked at night

Cherry Tree Wood in East Finchley will remain locked overnight for the immediate future following a cross-borough campaign led by the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood.

In November 2018, Barnet Council agreed to review whether to continue to lock parks overnight in order to save £75,000 (*The Archer*, March 2019).

At the Environment Committee last month the Council decided that for Cherry Tree Wood, along with 14 other parks, "there are currently no proposals... these sites would be considered following a review of any impacts following phase 1 and 2 and would be reported to a future committee for decision prior to implementation."

The parks in phase 1 will be left unlocked from 1 April and those in phase 2 will be subject to consultation in the coming

months. It is likely that Cherry Tree Wood and the other 13 parks in phase 3 will be looked at again early in 2020.

Roger Chapman, Chair of the Friends, said: "We need to remain vigilant. The Council are likely to bring forward proposals in 2020 to cease locking Cherry Tree Wood overnight. "The Friends Group mounted a borough-wide petition, which raised over 1,300 signatures in the few weeks prior to the Committee meeting. It shows the strong opposition to these proposals from local people rightly concerned about the potential increase in vandalism and anti-social behaviour."

Traders hope shoppers will put a spring in their step

By Charles Haydn

Traders and small businesses in East Finchley are hoping that the spring weather will encourage more residents to use the variety of services available to them from their local shops and businesses, reports local business network N2United.

Trade is still difficult up and down the High Road but businesses say they want to thank the local community for their loyalty and trade.

Over the coming months N2United and other East Finchley focused communities and the businesses they represent will be discussing how they can work together more closely to create an even stronger network and build on the strengths and special characteristics of N2.

They believe a united voice from local businesses, backed by support and loyalty from customers, can avoid the area's collection of shops, cafés, restaurants and small businesses turning into a wasteland of deserted premises and poorly maintained public spaces.

N2United meet regularly on the second Thursday of every month and local businesses, shops and enterprises are always welcome. For more information see N2United.co.uk.

Join the clean up

By Debbie Linton

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are holding a litter pick on Saturday 27 April from 10am to 12 noon. Meet at the Summerlee Avenue entrance to Cherry Tree Wood. All equipment such as bags, gloves and litter-pickers will be provided. Both adults and children welcome. Come along for a bit and help keep your wood tidy.

Also on Saturday 27 April there will be an hour-long guided walk in the wood. This will provide information about its history and activities from ancient times to when it was purchased by Barnet Council in 1915 to the modern day. Meet at the Summerlee Avenue entrance to the wood at 2pm.

Contact and membership

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood is a registered charity and has a new membership scheme which is free of charge. If you would like to be updated about activities in the wood or to just get in touch, email the Friends at friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com. There is also a new website friendsofcherrytreewood.home.blog and a new Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cherrytreewoodofef.

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A café all year round

By Diana Cormack

The café in Cherry Tree Wood opposite the tennis courts opened in its present form in 2005, the previous wooden kiosk having been burned down in 2002.

This latest metal construction has stood the test of time and is now under a third lessee, Pepe Dostezad. Regular readers may recognise his name, for Pepe was mentioned on the front page of our January issue with the news that the pavilion in the park is to be demolished. He had long been hoping to renovate that larger building place, with the intention of opening a café there.

However, Pepe is not too downhearted as he now wants to extend the kiosk café, making it somewhere that people can

sit and enjoy the park whatever the weather.

He intends to keep the existing counter and canopied area at the front for outside service. Indoor service would be available on the eastern side, with seating and tables on the paved area surrounded by clear windows.

"I really want to give something back to the community," he said when telling *The Archer* of his plans. "People could enjoy the park from here throughout the seasons."

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