



Alarm at proposal to leave park unlocked overnight

By John Lawrence

Friends of Cherry Tree Wood and residents who live nearby have raised the alarm over plans by Barnet Council to scrap the service that locks the park overnight.

The Friends say there is massive potential for increased antisocial behaviour and vandalism in Cherry Tree Wood if it is not secured during the night.

They will be taking a petition to the council's Environment Committee, which is due to discuss the removal of the lock-up service for all Barnet's parks on Thursday 14 March. You can find the petition online by going to <https://you.38degrees.org.uk> and searching 'Keep Barnet parks locked overnight'.

Petition organiser Roger Chapman stated: "Locked parks are often surrounded by residential properties which back onto them. Locking parks increases safety to residents and their property.

"Previous experience of not locking parks at night suggests that there will be an increase

in anti-social behaviour and vandalism which will increase rather than save the council and police service money in the long run."

Reasons for signing

Close to 600 people have already signed the petition and some have posted their reasons for doing so.

"Keeping the park open at night will be a safety hazard for the local neighbourhoods! There is enough crime as it is, this would make things worse!" said one.

Another commented: "This is a ludicrous idea that will encourage crime and antisocial behaviour, offer new opportunities for drug dealing and use, and put at risk the safety of women and elderly residents... It also creates more work for our overstretched police."

Friends get active

By Debbie Linton

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood held their AGM on Sunday 20 January with approximately 15 local residents attending, including local ward councillor Alison Moore. Roger Chapman was very much welcomed as the new Chairman.

A detailed activity plan for 2019/20 was discussed during the meeting. This is to include amongst many other things litter picks, guided walks, a bird and bat box making day and also bug, bird and animal surveys.

A management plan for the wood is also planned for both the ecology and the facilities, many of which it was felt are in urgent need of maintenance or updating.

A new bin and bench survey was also presented, highlighting that many bins are also in serious need of repair or replacement. The plan is to liaise with Barnet Council and other Friends groups across the borough to investigate sources of income and initiatives that could reinvigorate the wood.

As reported last month, the council are planning for

the demolition of the pavilion building. Various ideas were discussed at the AGM about how to make use of the site, from allowing nature to reclaim the area to introducing a space for tai chi classes or a green gym.

Become a Friend

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood have a new membership scheme which will be free of charge. If you would like to receive a newsletter and to be updated about activities in the wood (for example bat box making days and guided walks) email the Friends at friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com.

There is also a new website: <https://friendsofcherrytreewood.home.blog> and a new Facebook page: www.facebook.com/cherrytreewooddef/

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No entry: The pavilion pictured in 2008. Photo John Dearing.

What should replace the pavilion when it is demolished?

By Diana Cormack

The Archer has regularly reported on the state of the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood following its closure over 30 years ago. There have long been differing opinions about what should be done with the building, ranging from those who wanted it to be demolished, leaving that part of the wood to return to its natural state, to others who felt it should be put to a more specific use.

However, any hopes of the dilapidated structure being rejuvenated were finally dashed at the end of last year when the council came to a settlement with the then lessee, prior to demolition arrangements being made (*The Archer*, January 2019).

At the time of writing Barnet Council told us: "We're currently in the process of trying

to source a contractor to arrange for the safe demolition of the building."

Some people have put their memories of the pavilion on social media whilst others have been suggesting what might be done with the site, particularly if the solid base should be left behind, such as an outdoor gym.

Did you attend the playgroup

in the pavilion? Was it where you shared some memorable teenage moments? Did you ever use the changing rooms for a sporting event? What do you think should happen to the site? Share your memories and suggestions by emailing them to the-archer@lineone.net or write to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.

A glimpse inside the old pavilion

By Jake Eiseman-Renyard

I only remember the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood being out of use, though in the 1990s I helped to move equipment for the East Finchley Community Festival in and out of it, catching a view of the forgotten world inside.

The inside walls only came up to ceiling level, with no ceiling, just the roof's empty shell above. A playgroup had used the building just before my time; the main room they used still had a mural with cartoon characters at a picnic, looking similar to the paintings on the side of an ice-cream van.

It was a sad, rather eerie, once-jolly place where past generations of children had played. The changing rooms and toilets inside were in a similar state: crying out to be used again after so many years.

Last stage

The ground-level veranda was fenced off several years back, though that didn't stop people squeezing under or around the barriers, including at least one attempted arsonist. Nor did it stop one of the side doors being left unlocked for several days; I sometimes had a look inside. A crude wall-painting of Mickey Mouse now had an even cruder phallic addition and I'd never seen so many cobwebs before in the former changing rooms.

In 2014, the old interior was

stripped out in the last attempt to make an indoor café. After so many years out of use, the building was found to be in a worse state than initially thought. Then the tools and equipment were stolen, stalling the project.

I was very sad, but not surprised, to hear of the demolition plan in January. Perhaps lessons can be learned from this wasted opportunity to make something great of the building. For those who were defeatist before: it doesn't have to be like this.



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