



How the wood is turning over many new leaves

By Debbie Linton, of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood

There has been wonderful progress in the wood over the last couple of years. The dilapidated old pavilion building is now a space reclaimed by nature and the kiosk is up and running again, offering a welcome array of refreshments.

A new gardening group has been busy planting flower beds. A small orchard and meadow has also been established. Regular litter picks have occurred, with help from Duke of Edinburgh volunteers, to keep the whole wood tidy.

A grant for £20k has also helped towards, for example, a new noticeboard and a new path beside the playground. New bins have been installed. The tennis and basketball courts have been resurfaced by Barnet Council. A successful campaign has kept the wood locked overnight and a new Barnet-wide Green Space Network has also been established

Enhancing and maintaining the green space

As reported in *The Archer* in October, proposals have been submitted to extend the wood at the High Road entrance. The idea of enhancing pockets of green space in urban areas is growing in momentum.

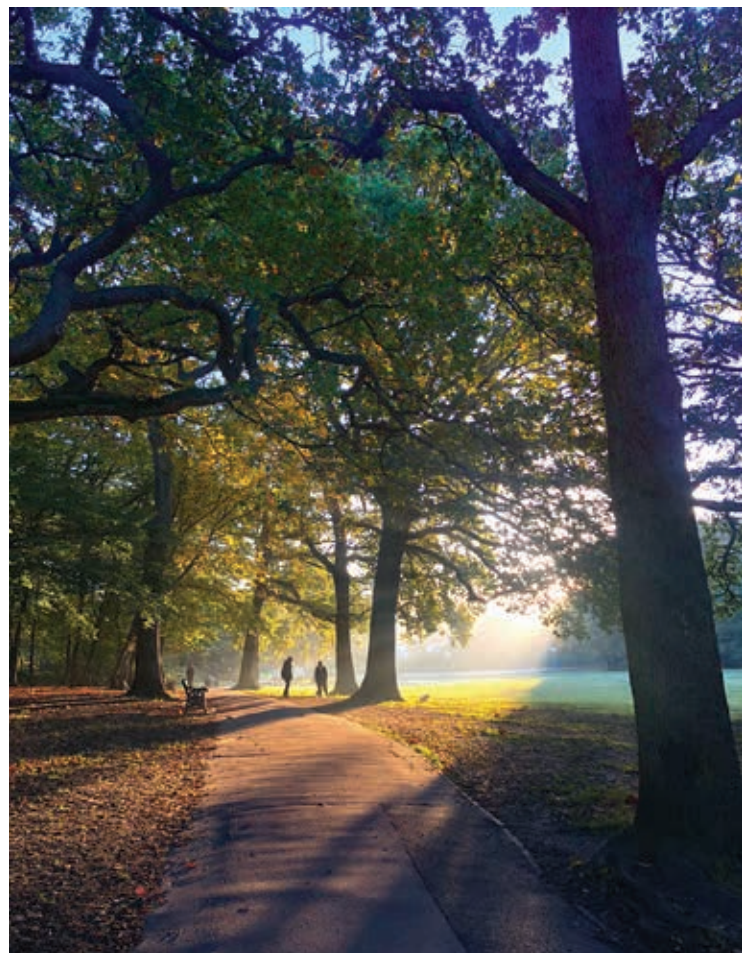
The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are also keen that any new building does not physically impact the existing wood. As reported last month, a current objection is to a proposed six-storey building overlooking the wood on its western side. The wood has offered a tranquil and small green oasis for an extremely long time. With some careful consideration and

discussions it could continue to do so.

The year ahead and the January AGM

There are lots of plans for the wood in the year ahead. These include installing a drinking water fountain; a nature trail; and some new playground equipment. Family activities are planned, such as making bee and insect hotels and bird and bat boxes.

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood group is always pleased to hear from people and our annual meeting is open to everyone. It is on Zoom at 7pm on Tuesday 11 January 2022. For further details email friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com



New day: Planting and regeneration projects are transforming Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Lois Lawrence.



Social climber: A rat, circled, in a tree near the High Road entrance to the wood. Photo Josh King.

Tales of squirrels and rats

By Daphne Chamberlain

How did you identify the rats in the trees of Cherry Tree Wood in the photos we printed in October? What did you look for first? I bet you were like me, and went for the tails.

As someone who once enjoyed the company of a friend's pet rat, I've always thought that squirrels have an unfair advantage in their beautiful tails. As I've heard many people say, "Aren't squirrels just rats with furry tails?"

But the answer to that is no. According to the internet, they are completely different species. Then, having noticed a couple of undoubted squirrels in a nearby garden with rather challenged tails, I was wondering whether they could interbreed.

Again, the answer is no. In fact, squirrels are extremely exclusive, and crossbreeding even between different types of squirrel is very rare. Red

and grey squirrels are different species.

Squirrels and rats are obviously co-existing in Cherry Tree Wood. Apparently, that's no problem if living conditions are good, but in a famine, rats would lose out to grey squirrels, who are bigger, quicker and more agile. I got this information from <https://neeness.com>, where you can find answers to many different questions.



Never too soon to dream of spring

By Piers Reilly

Every evening this month, staring out into the amber-hued gloom, it can feel as though brighter days are all too far away. Will we ever again be able to sit outside without three pairs of socks and a huge mug of warm tea or, if you want the freezing mist to become a more festive haze, mulled wine?

While the hours of daylight may have faded to what feels like a brief 20-minute window somewhere around lunchtime, we can recapture some of those brighter days by looking forward to a sweeter spring and planning our grand designs.

Now there is no shame in wandering around a garden centre and grabbing what you fancy. Truly gorgeous gardens have been created this way. However as we are driven indoors by the weather, surely we will find a few minutes here and there to sit down and map out a potential masterpiece.

There is no need to get too complex, a pencil and paper will be just fine. Freehand the approximate shape of your garden or whatever space you want to fill, then figure out where the sun rises and sets relative to it.

The true fun begins now, where you are held back by nothing but your imagination (and purse or wallet). Check out a few seed catalogues and explore the huge range of options they provide, look at different plant pairings, consider garden design principles then throw them aside if they restrict you; why not go the whole hog and create a little vegetable patch to enjoy your own produce?

Do not feel held back if space is limited, a garden can be a tin can with a single seed, simply make the most of what you have. Consider going vertical to maximise



High-rise horticulture: This tiered planter makes the most of the limited space in a courtyard garden. Photo Piers Reilly.

your opportunities, or invoke the classic basket and trough techniques for maximum maneuverability.

No matter what you choose,

now is the time to sit down and dream of a spectacular spring. It might even give you something to think about at the office Christmas party.

COME AS YOU ARE
CHURCH@FIVE
COME AS YOU ARE

Sundays at 5pm
Green Man Community Centre
Strawberry Vale N2 9BA

CAROLS ON THE GREEN 12 December at 5pm on the Green in Strawberry Vale	NATIVITY & CHRISTINGLE 19 December at 5pm in the Green Man, followed by tea.
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