



Wildflowers and kiosk hopes: news from the Wood

By Roger Chapman, Friends of Cherry Tree Wood
Summer has come to Cherry Tree Wood. The work of our wonderful gardening group is paying off with the orchard trees looking good and the pollinator plants in the developing meadow area attracting a great many bees and insects. Some of the beds we look after are wrapped in woven willow wands and the yellow irises in the bog garden have been blooming well in recent weeks.



Water garden: Yellow irises

The kiosk remains closed but hopefully not for much longer. There are new lessees so we hope to have a functioning café open again soon.

Regular litter picking takes place at 4pm on the second Sunday of each month and, touch wood, litter seems to be a bit more under control. It is always worth a reminder to please use the bins or, if they are full, take it home with you.

The refurbished tennis and basketball courts are proving extremely popular with the tennis courts fully booked for long periods.

In touch and involved

A group is working on improvements to the playground. Look out for a survey coming soon and if you want to get more involved in this work drop an email to us: friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com

The history of the Wood is long and varied. If you want to find about it then do take a look at our website: <https://friendsofcherrytreewood.home.blog/the-history-of-cherry-tree-wood/>

To keep in touch with the Friends, and to become a member (it's free – just sign up) and receive our newsletter, contact us via our email address above or join in one of our regular litter picks. We are always on the look out for volunteers and at the moment are looking to improve our website and social media presence. We could also do with some design skills help for our newsletter and posters. If you can spare some time for these do let us know.

Landmarks past and present

After mapping out some lockdown exercise walks from Sedgemere Avenue, N2, for himself and fellow residents, local historian Tony Roberts is now developing town trails for Finchley.

Places of interest are marked on a map and brief notes of each added. Some places still exist while others have bitten the dust. Tony says it is proving fascinating research and will take some time to complete.

He wonders if local residents can identify missing landmarks, past or present, for him to add. Take a look at his landmark walks at: www.tonero.me.uk/walksfromfinchley.htm. You will also find other walks there of interest.

Festival help

The East Finchley Festival team is seeking volunteers for an event set to take place in Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 5th September.

They will need dozens of helpers on the day and also require a couple of volunteers to co-ordinate and organise activities in advance. If you think you might be able to help, please email eastfinchleyfestival@gmail.com

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Action-packed: The new basketball court in Cherry Tree Wood is well used. Photo Mike Coles.

Safety concerns over new basketball court

By Anthony Paphitis

Extensive renovation work to improve the basketball and tennis courts in Cherry Tree Wood has been completed recently, but issues are already being identified regarding the safety standards of the equipment installed.

Barnet Council spent upwards of £120,000 on resurfacing the single basketball and two tennis courts and installing new posts and nets, following calls from users to improve the safety and playing standards of the facilities.

Although there have been clear physical improvements, some users of the basketball court have noticed the equipment has not been installed at regulation level. Prior to redevelopment, it was agreed between the council and players that the hoops, posts and backboards would be of professional standard, to allow Cherry Tree Wood to hold competitive matches between local amateur teams.

Installers were recalled to correct the height of the hoops to the 10-foot regulation standard, but their attempts to fix the problem caused damage to the backboards. Users of the court have also spotted rust as a result of the backboard being cut to readjust the hoops, meaning the entire frame could be a safety risk just two months after being installed.

Gratitude but disappointment

Regular basketball player Kevin Lukau, a key stakeholder in pushing for the redevelopments, says he and the court's users are "incredibly grateful" to the council for making the improvements possible but is calling for the construction company responsible to be held accountable for the renovation's safety problems.

"The job they've done to adjust the rims has actually

made it less safe to use than it should be," Kevin said. "All they've done is cut the backboard and put new screws in which damages its condition and because it is outside we can already see signs of rust and deterioration.

"The disappointment for us is because it's an avoidable mistake. The council has done something for us and the community which we appreciate, but they could've taken stronger actions to ensure that taxpayers'

money is being spent properly."

Council response

Barnet Council has stated that the equipment is safe for use and that it is looking at other methods of altering the height of the hoops. A spokesperson said: "The boards are safe. This issue has been picked up as part of the snagging for the works. We are working with the contractor to find a solution that will ensure the hoops are at the correct height and installed correctly."



Repairs still needed: Kevin Lukau, back row centre, with his fellow players. Photo Mike Coles.

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