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Goodbye to Cherry Tree oaks

By Pam Kent

Four oak trees surrounding the children's playground in Cherry Tree Wood have been felled and another has been pruned.

The culling happened after a further inspection by Barnet Council determined that they posed a potential danger to park users.

THE ARCHER reported last autumn how one small child narrowly escaped injury when a large bough broke off and fell across part of the play area.

According to Andy Tipping, principal arboricultural officer for Barnet, all of the oaks had defects that could lead to 'limb drop'. This was probably due to the droughts of recent years causing lack of moisture to the upper branches. Before the felling took place, all the trees were assessed for any evidence of bat habitation and any cavities were investigated for presence of nesting birds.

Bob Noakes, senior tree surgeon for City Suburban Tree Surgeons, who were undertaking the task of demolition, said that it was always sad to see the demise of such grand trees.

In his opinion, they were under 100 years old and nowhere near maturity but he could understand the council's caution in felling them as they were in such a vulnerable area.

Councillor Colin Rogers, who is one of Barnet's tree wardens, said that the felling was a tragedy: "It should, however, be possible to replace the oaks with new trees around the playground which will give safer screening. The council's tree officers hope to start replanting this winter and I've asked them to consult with the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood."



Preparing to fell oak trees in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo by Toni Morgan

News from the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood

By David Attfield

By the time you read this, work should be underway on the renovation of the Cherry Tree Wood playground. Improvements costing £40,000 are to be made in time for the school summer holidays to provide a safer playground, with new equipment appealing to a wider age range.

This refurbishment will represent a huge achievement for the Friends. Last year, the future looked bleak. Barnet Council recognised that the playground's safety surface needed replacing but were unwilling to commit money for this because they didn't have funds to improve the equipment.

So the Friends applied for a grant for new equipment. Their application received huge support, with many park users signing a petition and giving their views on what

improvements they would like to see.

The result was an award of £20,000, the full amount applied for, from an organisation called *Living Spaces*. Barnet is meeting the rest of the cost and arranging the works.

Further developments

On completion of the refurbishment, the Friends need to report back to *Living Spaces* on the project. So, once again they will be seeking the views of playground users.

Is anybody there?

Many people are wondering when the café by the tennis courts will open for business.

Contact with Barnet Council has yielded no answer to this on-going question. Even serving a Freedom of Information Act notice on them about it has so far been in vain. If you would like to encourage Barnet Council to ensure that a café opens soon, then spare a couple of minutes to telephone them on 020 8359 2000 and ask to speak with Property Services. Let us know if you get any response!

To reach the Friends of Cherry Tree Woods, please contact David Attfield at 88 Summerlee Avenue, N2 or email info@cherrytreewood.co.uk

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