



Before and after: How the wood entrance looks now, left, and an artist's impression of the new layout

Facelift for a greener gateway to the wood

By Debbie Linton

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood have put forward a plan to radically improve the High Road entrance to the park opposite East Finchley tube station. They would like to change the tarmac area outside the current entrance into a green space with an improved path and gateway to make it more attractive visually and to give easier access directly from the High Road pavement.

Barnet Council has already marked the Park House site next to the entrance as an area for potential development for community use and housing. The proposal by the Friends group involves the small end section of Brompton Grove, between that site and the park entrance.

A new natural open space would be created, designed to complement the ancient woodland and improve shade and pollinator activity. Did you know that a B Line runs through Cherry Tree Wood, part of a nationwide network of 'insect

pathways' and wildflower-rich habitats in Britain's countryside and towns?

The proposals to extend the wood are on the Friends website at friendsofcherrytreewood.home.blog. At the East Finchley Festival last month, many people signed the petition asking Barnet Council to allow the extension. If you want to sign the petition it is now online (you have to create an account on the Barnet Council website) at <http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?id=156>

Next meeting and litter pick

The next Friends of Cherry Tree Wood meeting will be at 7pm on Tuesday 5 October and everyone is welcome. Get in touch for further details or about anything else by emailing friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com. Litter-picks are held on the second Sunday of every month. The next one will be at 4pm on Sunday 10 October meeting near the tennis courts. Again, everyone is very welcome and all equipment is provided.

Look out, squirrels! Now the rats are in the trees

By John Lawrence

Anyone walking through Cherry Tree Wood over recent months, particularly near the High Road entrance, will probably have spotted one of the park's growing population of rats crossing the paths and scurrying through the undergrowth.

Heavens above: A rat in the branches overhanging the path in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Josh King



So bold are the rats becoming that they seem to be completely taking over the territory of the grey squirrels who have lived there for many years. Photos we were sent by reader Josh King show one particularly large rat up in the branches of a tree overhanging the pedestrian path. Rats have always been found near the railway line, and some will say that squirrels are just rats with furry tails, but there has undoubtedly been a massive increase in rat sightings in the last six to 12 months, with many being reported when the wood was full of visitors for the East Finchley Festival last month.

Bold as brass

Josh told us: "When I take the dog for a walk, I hear what

sounds like rain in the trees above us. When I look up I can often see the rats up there and I guess it is only time before one falls on someone... "I have also noticed they are becoming increasingly brave on the ground, gathering in groups on paths until the very last moment when they scurry away into the bushes on each side of the path. A nest of rats has also been seen in the fallen trunks by the playground. "It's pretty off-putting to walk down that path and no one wants to hang around, which is a shame for our small piece of green space. We have on one hand the local community trying to make that part of the park nicer with their new plants and

butterfly patch and next to it are rats dining out. Before they take over something has to be done."

Residents in neighbouring roads have told *The Archer* that they regularly see rats in their gardens backing onto the wood and some won't leave their back doors open now for fear of them getting in the house.

Council response

A Barnet Council spokesperson said: "Our pest control team visited Cherry Tree Wood to identify and target rat nests near specific locations where vermin sightings have been reported. We remain committed to tackling this issue in the most effective way possible, without using methods that may put other local wildlife or domestic pets at risk."

Café opens to crowds in the park

By Diana Cormack

The last Sunday of August saw the long-awaited opening of Cherry Tree Wood's café in the newly refurbished kiosk opposite the tennis courts. Queues formed throughout the day and by 4.30pm there was standing room only as the group Rangoon performed Country and Western style to the appreciative audience at the opening event.

There were more queues at the café during East Finchley's Late Summer Festival and complimentary comments about the products they provide have been appearing on local media. As we reported in August, leaseholders Sharon Harding and Sharon Hall have future plans for performances by local musicians and artists as well as activities marking annual events. This month may see Sunday jazz

sessions and special activities for Hallowe'en.

They told *The Archer* that the response from locals has been overwhelming: "We're so lucky to have had such support from people. They have been so welcoming and have even thanked us when it's us who should be thanking them."

The café is open from 9am to 5pm daily with some shelter at the side to avoid showers.



Musical opening: Rangoon play for the crowd at the Cherry Tree Wood Café's first day. Photo Diana Cormack

Phoenix hopes for Bond sell-out

The Phoenix Cinema is screening the new James Bond film *No Time to Die* until Wednesday 13 October and is hoping to sell out... even though there will still be some empty seats.

Executive director Oliver Meek said the cinema had decided to keep social distancing measures in place for the time being, leaving a one seat space either side of bookings. "It's been a difficult decision because everyone has a different view on this, but the feedback from our customers so far is that they are reassured that we have these measures in place," said Oliver. "We expect the film to be very popular and we are considering

whether to increase capacity on some shows, but we will only do this if we think audiences will be comfortable. "A new Bond film is always a major cinematic event and we look forward to seeing the cinema busy, but the safety and comfort of our customers will always be our top priority." For details of *No Time to Die* screening times and other films showing, drop into the cinema or visit their website: www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

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