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Huge trees fall in Cherry Tree Wood

By Diana Cormack

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are meeting urgently with Barnet Council after two large trees in the park uprooted themselves last month, one falling to the ground just after a mother walked by wheeling a pram and the other coming to rest across part of the children's playground.

The two mature hornbeams collapsed within the space of 12 hours, the first at around 11pm near the playground. The following morning, Wednesday 4 February, the second fell across the path which runs parallel to the Northern line, moments after Anna Suarez-Martinez had passed underneath with her child.

Anna, of Cherry Tree Road, N2, told The Archer: "I had just managed to get my baby to sleep in his pram when I heard a loud groan in the distance. I turned to see a huge tree falling to the ground, seemingly in slow motion. I could hardly believe it, particularly as it wasn't a windy day."

People are naturally anxious and asking questions about the monitoring of the trees which did not appear to have any obvious signs of damage or disease. The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood quickly issued an update explaining the possible causes. Although healthy, the roots were shallow and growing in

waterlogged clay soil with the saturated ground around unable to hold them firmly in place. As roots lose their grip, trees become easier to push over and prone to falling. This can happen even if there is no wind and especially if the tree has a broad crown.

Roger Chapman, Chair of the Friends group, said: "We have written to Barnet Council's Head of Trees and with the assistance of Councillor Alison Moore we are seeking an urgent meeting with council officers to discuss the issue.

"There is no need for alarm or widespread tree removal, but it does suggest extra checks after long wet spells are sensible, especially near paths and play areas. Areas that regularly flood or hold water should be monitored more closely. As wetter winters become more common, parks and woodlands across London will increasingly need to manage trees with this in mind.

"Cherry Tree Wood remains a



Close shave: One of the fallen hornbeams lies partly across the children's playground. Photo Mike Coles

valuable, living woodland. Thoughtful monitoring and gradual management will help keep it both safe and resilient in a changing climate."



Uprooted: The second hornbeam on the path alongside the Northern line. Photo Mike Coles

However, the young children from the nearby Monkey Puzzle Nursery who I met on their forest school walk on the

morning of the falls, had no doubt about who downed the trees. They assured me it was the Gruffalo!



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