

# FRIENDS OF BECKETT PARK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

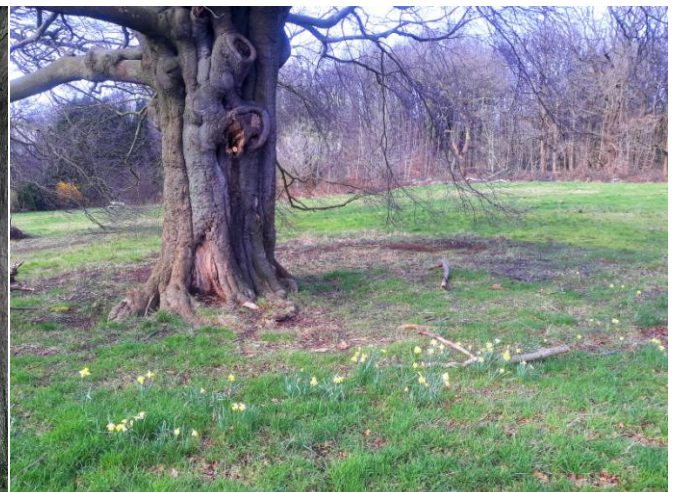
## MARCH 2024

**COUNCIL FINANCES** Like other local authorities, the Council's resources are very stretched. In Beckett Park they cut the grass, empty litter bins, fell dangerous trees, and maintain the playground. For almost everything else – tree and bulb planting, bench provision, woodland management, path clearance, graffiti removal, litter picking, etc. – the Friends volunteer to do the work, raising funds as required.

**POND** We now have permission to create a pond in the copse north of the playground (see Google Earth image). There was a pond shown on maps in 1912, but it had silted up and almost disappeared, though the area is very boggy in winter. Our Saturday team are constructing a 'dead hedge' and fence to limit unwanted access. We will then dig out a pond to attract amphibians and other wildlife. We're grateful to councillors Izaak Wilson, Emma Flint and Jools Heselwood for giving MICE money towards the cost of fencing.



**BULBS** The park is now a picture with all the daffodils and crocuses. Last Autumn we planted crocuses, snowdrops, native daffodils, and aconites, which are now emerging and should increase year by year. Many thanks to our Ward Councillors for funding the bulbs.





**CHERRY TREES** In the last few years we've planted many cherries and other ornamental trees along the main path. These are promising to provide a spectacular display in the coming weeks.



**BEE HOTELS** We've put up a cluster of bee hotels near the notice boards (see Google Earth image). These should be used by Red Mason bees (they're docile, short-lived and harmless!) in April and May.



**DYING TREES** Due to climate change and old age we've been losing more mature parkland trees. The latest was the huge 250-year-old beech at the top corner of the meadow which fell in October (see Google Earth image). As these mature trees die we always replace with young trees.



**NEW WOODLAND** The new woodland planted two winters near Queenswood Road ago is now beginning to get established.

**ORCHARD** We've planted a small orchard in the south-east corner of the meadow. When the apple trees are established they will provide fruit for anyone to pick.



**WET GROUND AND DRAINAGE** Winters are getting wetter, and water from springs and saturated ground flows across the main path and onto Queenswood Road, creating a hazard in frosty weather (see Google Earth image). We've asked the Council to look into solutions.



**SPONSORED TREES AND BENCHES** This year we have installed two sponsored memorial benches and planted one sponsored memorial tree.

**SATURDAY VOLUNTEERS** Our small group of volunteers meet most Saturday mornings to construct benches, plant trees, and generally keep the park in good order. We need more volunteers, as we have only four or five regulars, most of whom are getting old! We love being out in our beautiful park, and it's rewarding to see our work improve the park year by year. If you'd like to be added to the Saturday mailing list please let us know – there's no obligation to come every week.



