



Media Release

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MORE SPONSORSHIP FOR CHERRY TREES

FOLLOWING the very generous gesture from local businessmen Paul Whiers and Guy Tweedy to donate their reward money of £1500 towards the replacement Cherry Trees on Milton Way if the reward fails to help catch the culprits, a further offer of financial support has been received.

Although this flowering cherry tree walk is not part of the council's tree donation scheme, two local brothers have come forward to ask if they can purchase two of the trees in memory of their mum who died in August and their father who died some time ago.

John and Robert Marshall's parents, Vera and Cyril, took great pleasure in walking around the Stray and particularly loved Cherry Tree walk. Indeed, Vera used the tree donation scheme to dedicate a tree in Stray Rein in memory of her late husband.

John Marshall, who works for Harrogate Borough Council, explains why he and his brother decided to dedicate two of the cherry trees to their parents' memory. He said: "Our parents were great supporters of the Woodland Trust and we had pretty much decided to make a donation to Thorpe Perrow Arboretum in Bedale which suffered badly in the recent storms. But I was probably saddened more than most about the destruction of the cherry trees, which is why we are helping fund the replacements.

"Our mum spent the last few weeks of her life in a nursing home on Tewit Well Road. And the last time I took her out in her wheelchair to get some fresh air, we went along down Cherry Tree walk. Mum was so happy and told me how much she had enjoyed taking this walk in the past with our dad. We know that had mum still been alive she would have made a donation towards the replacement cherry trees so we are doing it in her memory. These vandals should learn how much hurt they have caused for a lot of people."

Councillor Pat Jones, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Amenity Services, has accepted John and Robert's offer of help. She said: "Delivery of the 28 replacement trees is expected next week. These have cost over £3000, which is more than the original replacements. Although the council would have found it difficult to find the money to replace the trees, we would have found it from somewhere. Happily, very generous and kind people have helped us and that has meant we could purchase some slightly more mature, although more costly, trees. If anyone else would like to help we would be happy to hear from them. We will also be relying on local people, commuters and visitors to keep their eyes peeled and to make sure the vandals don't return. Our closed circuit television cameras will continue to monitor the area." ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS: The original 100 cherry trees were planted on Milton Way as part of the celebrations to mark the Queen's Coronation in 1953. And each spring, the avenue has been covered in a swathe of pink blossom, which has given pleasure to many thousands of people for over half a century. Many of the original trees had to be removed because they had become diseased or had come to the end of their natural life. The 30 replacement trees were planted in December last year so as to ensure this very popular walk remains a pleasure for generations to come. Twenty-eight of the thirty were vandalised just four weeks later.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Pat Jones, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Amenity Services is available for comment on 01423 872466. Further technical information is available from Mr Patrick Kilburn, Head of Parks and Open Spaces on 01423 556717.

