

## Shepherds Cot Trust – Space to Play

### Spring 2021

I write on the anniversary of the first Corona Covid –19 lockdown. It is a poignant moment to reflect on how the past year on Shepherds Cot has been like no other. Our thoughts today are with all those who have suffered during the pandemic.

The site has been closed to sporting activity for many months. However, it has proved to be a vital lifeline for many club members and local people as a very special place to take exercise and fresh air in a unique urban oasis. We are thankful that we have such an open space and the year has reinforced how we must continue to work together towards maintaining this open land of natural beauty.

I would like to thank everyone who continues to maintain the fields and also help keep us safe: our club volunteers and workers who keep the site looking beautiful; our local police for responding to problems despite many other local demands on their time; our neighbours (Shepherds Hill Allotments, CREOS and GMTRA) for keeping a look out for any problems that arise – including incidents of vandalism and fly tipping.

These have been worrying times for security and clubs like North London Cricket Club have spent a lot of money in renewing old fencing. It is something we must all continue to be vigilant over, but the past year has seen greater community solidarity and there are good communication lines between groups. It has been a year when we were able to complete our new signs project and introduce some new planting. We have also continued to maintain trees, roads and other infrastructure all of which comes at considerable cost. It must be remembered that the Trust does not receive any local or central government funding.

As we look to a relaxation of Lockdown rules with the return of open sport on **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March** we wish everyone who enjoys our site a healthy year. But we also ask as usual that everyone observe Government Health Guidelines and Social Distancing. Please maintain vigilance and report any suspicious behaviour, keep our site tidy, keep dogs on leads and take any waste home.

It has been a particularly hard time for all young people and we wish our neighbours Highgate Wood School a successful restart as students get used to being back at school. We welcome the sound of the playground and the sound of young people and adults enjoying their cricket and tennis in our **Space to Play** as it wafts across the fields once more. Here's to joy returning to Shepherds Cot!

John Newton

Chairman, Shepherds Cot Trust

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