

# Views from the Hill

NEWSLETTER OF THE TEWKESBURY LODGE ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION October 2020



## Finding the ups in the Covid downs

I hope that everyone is keeping well during these difficult times. What a year 2020 has been so far and, as we go into autumn and winter, it seems that there will be more challenges ahead. Sadly, we are unable to hold our usual social events, including the Autumn Harvest Lunch and Fruit Pressing this month to celebrate the change in the seasons. But it is, perhaps, still a good time to reflect on some positive aspects of the past few months as perfectly described below by committee member and transport champion, Dave Leslie.

Valerie Ward (Chair)

## Tewkesbury Lodge Estate during Covid

When the 'Stay-home' order was issued on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, it was a frightening moment. Overnight, all the traffic, all the flights, all of London stood still. Here are some recollections from that *Clap the Carers* time up on the Estate.

I remember my first few walks down to Horniman Park and Sydenham Woods during lockdown. We were all allowed just one exercise 'jaunt' per day, and it was encouraging to hear the spring birdsong, and to breathe in the fresh air. The South Circular had virtually no cars, in either direction - at 10 am! On the pavements we all politely stepped aside onto the street, or into a driveway to avoid crossing within two metres of each other. Medical masks were in short supply, but a few enterprising neighbours started making their own versions to order. WhatsApp Street support groups appeared, and many neighbourly offers of help were made across the fences.



In early Spring, the sunny weather, blossom-filled trees, and furlough or work from home meant that those of us with gardens had the time and the weather to turn attention to gardening, slowed

only by the shortages of supplies, seeds and seedlings. I dusted off my Raleigh cycle and started doing little tours through the empty streets, firstly down to Peckham and Dulwich, then further afield - down roads empty of traffic but with many more joggers, walkers and cyclists than normal.

Gradually the restrictions began to lift. The take-aways opened up again - Deliveroo guys panting as they cycled up our Hill to deliver meals to grateful homes on the Estate. Amazon, Tesco, Sainsbury, Ocado and DHL vans - how would we have coped in all the years before the internet and home deliveries?

On my first business trip to Moorgate in early July, I was the only person in the whole carriage at 10 am! The City of London was still like a ghost town, the only people walking the streets being the 'back to work' construction workers as the big infrastructure projects went back into action. Most little shops and sandwich bars were closed.

But there are reasons for optimism going forward. Although our Autumn case rates are back to similar levels as March, fatalities are well down from those early days. Our medical teams have got to grips with how best to treat hospital cases and we, the public, have learnt how best to protect the vulnerable. The scientists say that we will face Covid and permutations thereof for many years to come, but the optimistic scenario is that the huge effort that has gone into studying how best to treat and then combat this virus will deliver knowledge for future generations to deploy against future hazards.

In this last year in Tewkesbury Lodge it could easily be observed how many young children have enjoyed the benefit of extra attention from their families. More walks together, more escorted cycling and more outdoor activity. The world is unlikely to return to the '7.30am to late' commuting drudgery we were used to. In the optimistic future we will have what we always wished for - a cleaner, greener Tewkesbury Lodge Estate, more time with our families, and a better balance to the world.  
*Dave Leslie*