**Kennington Park During Lockdown**

In the 15 or so years we’ve lived in Kennington, the park has always been a great local resource. The regeneration of the 1930s flower garden was a particular high, and the installing of the wonderful new sundial provides another historical reference for future generations.

But how was lockdown special. Well, I’ve never been a sports person. I hated sport at school, and over the decades had found that I liked swimming, cycling (though only gentle cycling!), found fun and fitness in Pilates, and that possibly my sport was lawn bowls. Hardly energetic.

In July 2020 I discovered, from a routine GP blood test, that I was pre-diabetic. Not diabetic yet, but unless I did something about it, I’d be on the slippery slope to Type 2 Diabetes. Diabetes, whatever anyone tells you, is a nasty, life-limiting disease. It causes circulatory problems, often ending in amputations. It causes problems with the retina including damage to sight. I could go on. Basically, you don’t want it. I decided that this was something I could do something about. It had been a shock, because I wasn’t visibly overweight (I was just at the top of the ‘normal’ BMI measure). I was probably what the doctors call ‘TOFI’ (thin on the outside, fat on the inside). In other words, I almost certainly had fat around my internal organs.

So, I did a bit of research about low-carb diets and exercise and committed to a new regime. I stopped eating all obviously sugar-laden foods, and the starchy, carb-heavy ‘white stuff’ (i.e. rice, bread, potatoes and pasta) and substituted them with more fresh vegetables, beans and other pulses.

But, and here’s where the park came in, I also decided to start running. Not too much, but regularly. So for three months I ran every day. My running was only a few laps of the park, but about half an hour got the blood pumping, the metabolism going, and generally made me feel good.

By the end of October my blood sugar levels had dropped by a third – and were very well down into the ‘normal’ range. I’d lost about 10-15kg from a year before. All in all a triumph.

Now, another six months on, I’m still running laps of the park. I see lots of friendly, familiar faces each morning. It’s a delight. In fact, it’s a life-saver.