



50 giving stories shared as part of The Marketors' Trust's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2026

No 23: The centre its neighbours refused to lose



A community afternoon on Abbotshall's playing fields and gardens.

In 2018, Catford was about to lose something it had not realised how much it needed. The Abbotshall Healthy Lifestyle Centre, a much-loved community hub on Abbotshall Road, faced closure when the organisation running it could no longer carry on and its funding ran out. What happened next is the reason it is still open today.

Rather than let it go, local people stepped in. Led by the Corbett Residents' Association, residents and staff formed a community board, registered as a charity, and took on the running of the centre themselves, securing an agreement with Lewisham Council to keep the doors open. A community crowdfunder did the rest, with more than a hundred local supporters raising more than their target between them. The centre had been saved by the very people it serves.

Today it is exactly what its name promises: a place for healthy living, for everyone. There is a café and vintage tea room, community and wildlife gardens, playing fields, fitness classes and yoga, childcare and youth football. Its mission, in its own words, is to “provide an environment that through physical activity, creativity and connection supports and celebrates healthy living for all in our community.” For a corner of southeast London, it is somewhere to move, to meet and to belong.



The community and wildlife gardens.

A volunteer-led centre saved by its community faces a particular challenge: it can only thrive if enough local people know it is there, and know what it offers. That is where The Marketors' Trust came in. Its £2,500 grant in 2022 helped Abbotshall tell its story and reach more of the neighbourhood it exists to serve. For a small charity, being found is the difference between surviving and flourishing.



In the café, where prices are kept low so everyone can enjoy them.

There is a neat symmetry to this one: a centre rescued by its community, helped by a company of marketers to reach further into that same community. The Trust doesn't fund a service itself; it gives the people who do the marketing skill to reach the people who need them. Fifty years of giving, in the belief that good marketing can be a genuine force for good.



Website: www.abbotshallhlc.org.uk

How to give

Every gift, at whatever level, helps secure the Trust's grants, awards and care for the next fifty years.

To give, go to: <https://www.marketors.org/the-marketors-trust/support-ways-to-give>

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