Residents say council efficient and well run

Fun in the sun
Get out and about this summer
Latest on your libraries

Win a family ticket for The Tiger who Came to Tea at New Wimbledon Theatre
We asked

In February and March 2017 we asked a representative sample of residents to tell us what they think about the council and our services in a comprehensive residents’ survey.

“You said”

The results showed more than 90% of Merton residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, which is significantly higher than the national picture. Two-thirds of Merton residents are satisfied with the way the council runs things and agree we provide value for money. Three-quarters agree the council acts on the concerns of local residents, and 81% agree it keeps residents informed. Those who weren’t happy with the council were asked why and the areas most mentioned were people who litter our streets and the street cleaning and refuse collection/recycling service.

We did:

We are delighted to have received record results from residents but we know we can always do better. With the government having cut council budgets by more than 40%, we need to find more efficient ways of keeping our streets clean. This is why the council is looking at introducing wheelie bins from October 2018. We have also increased our enforcement activities to tackle the minority who spoil Merton. In 2016/17:

- We issued 5,996 fixed penalty notices for littering offences
- We issued nine fixed penalty notices of £400 for small fly tips following new rules introduced in May 2016
- We removed 5,918 square meters of graffiti
- We cleared 1,820 tonnes of litter
- We cleared 2,260 tonnes of fly tips
- We inspected 1,648 vehicles reported as abandoned vehicles
- We introduced new education programmes for children in primary schools to raise their awareness of the impact of litter and graffiti

What you can do to help:

- Report graffiti, fly-tipping and other problems online at merton.gov.uk/litter
- Sometimes our bins are full. If so, take your litter home with you and dispose of it sensibly.
- Volunteer to help make your neighbourhood cleaner and safer by becoming a Street Champion

(find out more) merton.gov.uk/streetchampions

The Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis, writes for My Merton.

As I’ve said in this column before, I want Merton Council to be businesslike. It goes back to my time as the national spokesperson for the Federation of Small Businesses.

What struck me about the best businesses was that they constantly spoke to their customers, constantly sought their opinion, in order to learn what people thought they did well and what needed to improve. That’s why we carry out a regular survey of Merton residents.

We received record results this year, with 76% of people saying we are efficient and well run.

I believe we all deserve good quality local services, but when residents say thank you it lets the council know that we’re going in the right direction.

More and more families want to come and live in Merton. The survey found that 92% of residents are satisfied with Merton as a place to live, a much higher proportion than across the rest of the country. With plans for a new library in Colliers Wood, a new leisure centre in Morden and a new secondary school in Wimbledon, you can see the attraction!

Even the mayor of London has heard about our success! Sadiq Khan visited us earlier in the year to look at improvements to Morden town centre and Colliers Wood. I look forward to having Sadiq back when the regeneration of Morden is complete.

Of course, given our reduced government funding, we’ve had to tighten our belts when it comes to some of our day-to-day spending and there are some services we can no longer provide. But overall residents like you have said you are happy with the services we offer and the way we run the council.

We won’t always get things right. I think we still need to improve street cleanliness, for example, and that’s why I’m backing wheelie bins, to stop foxes ripping open our rubbish bags. But it’s good to know that residents appreciate the services we offer and have let us know.

I want to say thanks to all of you, whether you run the local residents’ association, sit on a parent teacher committee or help out with the local allotments – you’re all part of what makes Merton such a great borough!

Stephen Alambritis
Community

News
The latest news from around the borough

Features
Cleaner, greener
Food waste facts
Wheelie bins
Shopping smarter

Health news
Tips on staying fit and healthy

Regeneration update
High Path Estate
Morden Court Parade facelift

5 minutes with
Foster carer, Mani Gakwaya

Regulars
Working life
Educational psychologists
Drs Meadbh Ni Fhoighil and Brigid O’Leary

What’s on
Your guide to all that’s going on in Merton this summer

Get out and about this summer

Keeping Merton safe and sound

Join Merton’s growing army of volunteers

Don’t forget to visit our website!
merton.gov.uk/mymerton
You can also follow us on:

merton.gov.uk
**Merton retains Fairtrade status**

Merton retained its Fairtrade Borough status and received a glowing endorsement from the Fairtrade Foundation. The Foundation was particularly impressed with the collaboration of local community groups, faith organisations, schools and supermarkets, engagement with MPs and support from the council. Buying Fairtrade products helps over 1.6 million farmers and workers who produce coffee, tea, bananas, wines, flowers and other goods many of us buy regularly.

**Merton celebrates St George’s Day**

Merton celebrated St George’s Day earlier in the spring. Thousands of scouts, cubs and sea cadets turned out for the parade through Wimbledon High Street, proudly displaying a multitude of colourful flags. They all saluted the then Mayor, Cllr Brenda Fraser, as they went past her.

**RideLondon returns to borough**

The world-famous bike event, RideLondon, will be coming through Merton once again. Residents will see thousands of amateur and professional cyclists ride through Raynes Park and Wimbledon on 30 July. Many riders will be raising money for charities, so come out and wave them on. The council will be working with the organisers to keep any disruption to a minimum.

**Merton adult education**

Two art exhibitions of work created by students with disabilities or learning difficulties were recently displayed in Merton Arts Space and in Merton Civic Centre. The students were studying creative arts on Merton Adult Education courses.

Merton Council offers a variety of subjects for residents with disabilities or learning difficulties to equip them with the skills they need to live independently in the community including cookery, maths, IT, exercise and horticulture. Enrolment is open for courses starting in September in venues around the borough. Applicants will be assessed to find a course which meets their needs.

**Have a blast**

Sports Blast offers free sports activities for 14 to 25-year-olds who live in Mitcham. Summer is a great time to get involved in sports locally. Tennis Blast is back during the Wimbledon Fortnight on Saturday 8 July, 10am until 3pm at Wimbledon Park tennis courts. This is a great opportunity for young people to practise their racquet skills, and it has been known for a Wimbledon tennis star to come along for a volley or two.

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Dancing at the Royal Festival Hall

Young people from eight Merton schools performed at the Ballet Rambert Experience Day, hosted by the renowned national Rambert dance company at the Royal Festival Hall earlier this year. One hundred and seventy-five nine to 16 year-olds danced in the Royal Festival Hall’s Clore Ballroom on London’s Southbank to a 250-strong audience. The performance was part of The Rambert Imprints schools’ programme of dance and performance, giving young people experience in working with a professional performing arts company.

Sadiq Khan visits Merton

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan visited Merton in April to look at the development plans for Morden. He saw first-hand the refurbishment of the shopfronts in London Road which has already been completed, bringing them back to their 1930s glory. The council’s team of regeneration experts showed him the longer-term plans for revitalising Morden and making it a thriving and vibrant place to live and work for generations to come.

Council prosecutes four for littering

Merton Council prosecuted four people caught littering in the borough, with hundreds of pounds in fines.

Diego Lijtmaer, 39, of North Kensington, Darius Morkhunas, 35, of Newham, Jordan Lewis Ring, 22, of Swanley and Radu Marcel Terec, 30, of Lewisham were each ordered to pay £400 in court costs and fines by Lavender Hill Magistrates’ Court.

Efficient and well run council

Results of Merton’s residents’ survey published this summer show a record number of residents think Merton Council is efficient and well run (76%). The survey also reports record satisfaction rates among residents who agree the council is doing a good job, is efficient and well run, responds quickly when asked for help and involves residents when making decisions.

Over 90% of Merton residents are satisfied with the local area as a place to live, significantly better than the national figure of 86%. Nearly two thirds of residents agree the council provides value for money (65%), also well above the national figure (47%). Seventy-five percent agree the council acts on the concerns of local residents and 81% agree the council kept them informed about services and benefits.

As the council brings a new leisure centre to Morden and a new library to Colliers Wood over the coming year, it was encouraging to see a significant number of residents say they were satisfied with the borough’s leisure and sport facilities. Residents were less satisfied with the street cleanliness and refuse collection in the borough. The council is working on turning this around by introducing wheelie bins in October 2018, which should result in cleaner streets and increased recycling.

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April was a special month at Merton Civic Centre when the resident peregrine falcons’ young hatched from their eggs. Four white, fluffy chicks drew much attention when they made their first appearance on the civic centre roof webcam.

Free dog health checks and chipping
The Dog Trust will be visiting Merton parks over the summer between 11am and 3pm, offering free microchipping and health checks for dogs. They will be checking eyes, ears, teeth and weight so dog owners can be confident that their pet is in tip top condition.

OSCA awarded to Merton teacher
A teacher at Ricards Lodge High School has been presented with a special Merton OSCA for her exceptional support for students. The Outstanding Service for Children Award was given to Angelina Di Passio in recognition of her leadership and support of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Group at the Wimbledon school where she teaches history. Ms Di Passio is a volunteer staff member of the school’s Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Working Group, made up of students and staff.

10 MAGICAL DAYS ON WIMBLEDON COMMON
EVENTS FOR ALL TASTES: MUSIC • COMEDY • FICTION • POETRY • POLITICS • HISTORY • SPORT • CHILDREN

Tickets on sale from July 2017 Priority early booking discounts for Friends wimbledonbookfest.org

2017 Line-up includes:
Duke of Edinburgh success for Merton pupils

Merton celebrated its growing Duke of Edinburgh success in the spring when the then Mayor of Merton, Cllr Brenda Fraser, presented 90 young people with their awards at a special ceremony in Wimbledon Arts Space. In total, 355 young people from 13 secondary schools across the borough completed their awards in Merton. Perseverance and a sense of adventure are qualities needed to complete the DoE and Merton’s young people have these in abundance.

Volunteering in hospitals, getting involved in sports and taking part in expeditions to the Brecon Beacons and Yorkshire Dales are all part of achieving a DoE award, building confidence and self-reliance for life.

New car clubs

Merton Council has signed up with car clubs, Drive Now and Zip Car in an effort to cut congestion in the borough and reduce air pollution. Drive Now vehicles include electric BMW i3 cars, Mini convertibles, 1 Series and 130 Minis. Zip Car vehicles include Yaris and Golfs. They can be booked using a free Smartphone app and hired on a number of packages including by the minute and three-day hire.

Left to right: Rebecca Marrett, former pupil at Ursuline High School, with Seo-Yeon Lee and Anabel Watkins from Merton

New Mayor of Merton

Merton Council elected Councillor Marsie Skeete as the new Mayor of the borough for 2017/18 at the annual council meeting in May. She is the first woman from Guyana to be Mayor of Merton. Councillor Skeete has represented residents of Longthornton ward since 2014. She will be supported by her Deputy Mayor, Councillor Judy Saunders and consorts, Arexa Skeete, Delores Bisnouth, Yeuton Crandon and Stephen Sanders. Her charities are Mencap, which supports people with learning disabilities and the Commonside Trust, which works to improve the lives and environment of people living in Merton. Councillor Skeete works as a lecturer in English at HMP High Down Prison in Belmont.

Merton pupils praised for school attendance

Pupils at schools in Merton have been praised for attendance levels which outshine the average for schools across the country. Figures released earlier this year from the Department for Education show attendance is better than the outer London average too.

Primary schools achieved 96.2 per cent against a national average of 96 per cent. Secondary schools achieved 95.3 per cent compared with 94.8 per cent nationally, special schools were at 92.4 per cent attendance compared to 90.9 per cent nationally and pupil referral units achieved 81.4 per cent attendance compared with 67.4 per cent nationally.

Merton wins small business-friendly award

The council has won an award for being small business-friendly. The awards are run by London Councils, which represents the 32 London boroughs and the City of London, and the London region of the Federation of Small Businesses. Recognising the council as an organisation which encourages local entrepreneurship, the award was specifically for its new purchasing system which makes it much easier for companies to bid for contracts. The council has previously won Best Programme of Support for Small Businesses and Best All Round Small Business Friendly Borough.

Merton Council’s head of commercial services, Dawn Jolley, receives the award from Business and Digital Policy senior adviser Ben Johnson at the Mayor of London’s Office.
WIN A FAMILY TICKET FOR THE WIMBLEDON LAWN TENNIS MUSEUM & TOUR

The Wimbledon Foundation is offering one lucky winner the chance to discover the traditions, triumphs, sights and sounds that make Wimbledon the most sought-after title in tennis.

The Wimbledon Foundation is the charity of the All England Club and The Championships. Since 2013, the Foundation has donated almost £1 million to local charities and community organisations helping to meet social needs and tackle inequalities in the boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth.

For your chance to win, simply answer the following question:

Who won the 2016 Ladies’ Singles Final?

a) Venus Williams
b) Serena Williams
c) Angelique Kerber

In your answer, you must include the following: name, email address, phone number and postal address. You can email your answer to communications@merton.gov.uk or send it to: My Merton, 7th floor, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX.

The closing date for entries is 31 July 2017.

Terms and conditions: The competition is to win one family ticket (two adults and two children) to visit the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum and Tour Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AE. The Museum is open daily except 2-18 July 2017, 24-26 December 2017 and 1 January 2018. Tours do not run between 18 June and 22 July 2017. For the tour schedule, visit wimbledon.com/museum. The prize cannot be exchanged or used in conjunction with any other offer. There are no cash alternatives, accommodation or travel included in this prize.

Armchair tennis

As the world’s attention turns to a grassy corner of SW19, two Merton-based charities have been reliving their Wimbledon memories as part of Armchair Tennis, a community art project which marks three significant anniversaries in the relationship between the BBC and The Championships. 2017 marks 90 years since the first radio broadcast from Wimbledon; 80 years since Wimbledon was the first outside sports broadcast, and 50 years since broadcasts from Wimbledon marked the first regular colour television service in Europe.

Guests from Attic Theatre Company and the Ethnic Minority Centre, two charities supported by the Wimbledon Foundation, visited The All England Lawn Tennis Club and recorded their memories of listening to and watching The Championships. Sabitri Ray, Project Director at the Ethnic Minority Centre recalls, “In 1987 we were going to Calcutta on the Rajdhani Express, my father took a tiny little radio on the train and we were all listening, not just my family but others joined us. The reception was bad and my father would get angry and slap the radio. We were all just screaming ‘Come on Martina, come on Martina’.”

Listen to the stories at wimbledon.com/learning or visit the On Air Exhibition at Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum until 4 March 2018.

Litter picks at the ready for Abbotsbury pupils

A big thank you goes out to Abbotsbury school for the litter pick they organised in Morden Recreation Ground in May. There was also a great turnout from Cranmer school in March, with a helping hand from AFC Wimbledon’s very own Haydon the Womble.
St Matthew’s Church of England School, formerly Cottenham Park Primary School, is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

On the opening day of the infant school, 30 children arrived to the sound of the bell that called them to their new school on its original site in Pepys Road. Canon William Haygarth, vicar of St Mary’s Church, Wimbledon 1859–1902 founded the school and the first teacher was Miss Crump, who was paid £12 per year until the first permanent headteacher, Emma Welsford, was appointed in January 1869.

St Matthew’s Church was opened on this site in 1909 and its close association to the school was recognised in 1997 when it was renamed St Matthew’s C of E School, Cottenham Park. The school was relocated to its current site on Cottenham Park Road in 1975.

This year’s Wimbledon BookFest is 5–15 October 2017 and to get things off to a great start, Merton’s annual arts festival will be opening at Wimbledon Library’s Space on 5 October with the award winning writer Ali Smith in conversation with BBC broadcaster Samira Ahmed. Everyone is welcome and BookFest organizer Fiona Razvi is encouraging as many people as possible to read Ali Smith’s latest book Autumn which will be available in Merton libraries throughout the summer.

Wimbledon BookFest is also launching the Robert Graves Poetry Prize with University of Roehampton. More information will be posted on the Wimbledon BookFest website in due course.

Ali Smith

Rainbow flag raised over civic centre

Merton Council raised the Pride flag over the civic centre at a special event to mark International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in May. The event was organised in partnership with the local LGBT forum and Merton police to reinforce the message that Merton is an open and accepting place where all people can live safely and peacefully alongside each other. The then Mayor, Councillor Brenda Fraser raised the flag saying: “Merton is no sanctuary for those with hatred in their heart”. She also spoke about the role everyone could play in tackling hate crime.

Tyrone Ashby, Chair of Merton LGBT Forum, said: “Everyone has a right to live their life the way they want to. Smartphone apps like Be Safe and Self Evidence allow people to instantly report crimes to the Police without having to speak to them.”
Get out and about this summer

Merton is one of the greenest boroughs in London, so get out in the sunshine and have some fun. There are lots of activities and many are free! My Merton takes a look at what’s happening in a park near you.

Find your perfect park

We always try to make Merton a great place for families. We have so many green spaces just waiting to be explored. Take your pick from more than 100 parks and gardens – from the lush lawns of Cannizaro Park to the wilds of Mitcham Common.

Here are a few ideas for getting the most from the great outdoors:

- Visit historic Morden Hall Park; grab a copy of the National Trust’s 50 things to do before you’re 11+ and start crossing them off.
- Watch the batting on Mitcham’s Cricket Green – reputedly England’s oldest cricket ground still in use.
- Go birdwatching in Ravensbury Park nature reserve and maybe spot a Kingfisher.
- Follow the six plus-mile Beverley Brook trail from Wimbledon Common to Richmond Park, Barnes and Putney.
- Follow the circular park around the river and wetland area in Wandle Park.

Play it cool

When temperatures soar, little ones love our brilliant paddling pools. Experience our interactive play pools at Wimbledon Park and Tamworth Recreation Ground, Mitcham or just splash about in six other pools around the borough. They’re open from the start of the summer holidays, except Wimbledon Park which is open now.

The paddling pools are in Colliers Wood Rec, Joseph Hood Rec, King George’s Playing Fields, Morden Park, Rowan Road Rec and Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields.
Holiday fun
Merton’s Active Kids courses have been a big part of summer for a while now, giving generations of young people unforgettable holiday experiences. Book now for everything from horse-riding and tennis to song-writing. Courses cost from £20 a day. Open to ages 5+ (depending on activity).

Feel the wind in your sails
Wimbledon Park’s stunning lake is a safe environment to have a go at sailing and many more activities, on water and dry land, including kayaking, windsurfing, archery, and climbing. All courses are taught by fully-trained staff in a friendly environment and cost as little as £10 per hour. We have options for adults and children and our new Teen Supreme course for the over 13s. You can also book our water-based activities for a party with a difference.

Have a blast
Sports Blast is a scheme that runs free sports courses for 14 to 25-year-olds who live in the east of the borough. You can take part in football, netball, tennis and fitness sessions.

Look after your litter
We love the fact that you enjoy spending time in our green spaces, but while you’re out and about please be responsible about litter. Use the many bins around our parks, but remember they fill up quickly on busy days. If the bin is full, please take your rubbish home and help us keep the parks the beautiful places that we all love!

Fit for free
Merton’s 12 outdoor gyms, at parks around the borough, are fully equipped to build stamina and strength. Add them on to your running route for the perfect outdoor workout.

Pitching in
Team sports are a great way to stay fit and enjoy a bit of community spirit. Our pitches and courts cater for soft ball, cricket and beach volley ball. Our football pitches are available from October but our floodlit multi-use courts can be booked all year round.

Pedal power
Look out for free, on-road cycling courses, during the summer holidays, teaching control, hazard awareness and correct road positioning to children aged 10+. You’ll need your own bike and helmet. Adult courses are also available.

Scooting about
You’ll be able to visit what may be the UK’s first dedicated scooter park this summer. It’s in Mostyn Gardens, beside Poplar Primary School. Used by the school during term-time, it will be open to the public weekends and holidays in the coming weeks. It’s going to get even better now the school has raised its £20k target to complete the park with a timber shelter, street furniture, road markings and the completion of the race track. The council gave a helping hand to the campaign, which drew the attention of Olympic stars, the Brownlee Brothers and many others who generously contributed, including many Poplar parents.

Be bowled over
A great sport for all ages, bowls is easy to learn and a good way to meet new people, while enjoying a bit of fresh air. There are six greens in parks around the borough with clubs based at each. Check out the What’s On section.

find out more
For Merton Active Plus visit merton.gov.uk/activekids
For sports pitches go to booking.merton.gov.uk/pitches
For sports blast go to merton.gov.uk/sportsblast
For watersports visit booking.merton.gov.uk/watersports
For cycle training visit www.cycleconfident.com/merton and select Child Group Cycle Training or call Natalie on 020 3031 6730
For bowls go to merton.gov.uk/bowls or call 020 8545 3667
Food waste facts

According to the food waste campaign Love Food Hate Waste, around seven million tonnes of edible food is being thrown away every year in the UK – that’s £13 billion-worth!

In this My Merton we’re looking at ways to help residents cut their personal food waste mountain and recycle all those non-edible by-products, such as peelings and shells.

Working with waste reduction partnership, Resource London, we’ve been out and about talking to people about reducing waste. At a spring event at Sainsbury’s Merton, visitors to our stall used pedal power to turn fruit into smoothies!

In Merton our food waste recycling scheme is well established. Did you know the food waste we recycle is turned into a fertiliser as well as energy to power homes?

Food waste you can recycle includes:
- fruit and veg peelings
- tea bags and coffee grounds
- egg shells
- fish and meat bones
- rice, pasta
- raw or cooked fish and meat
- plate scrapings

But please, no:
- plastic bags
- packaging
- liquids
- oil or liquid fat

If you’re not using the service yet, why not give it a try? Contact us for a bin and kitchen caddy now. Visit merton.gov.uk/foodwaste or call 020 8274 4902.

You can line your kitchen caddy for free with newspaper or buy food waste bags from most supermarkets for around £2.50 per pack of 20 (12p per bag).

Wheelie bins

Merton is one of nine London boroughs set to benefit from a €50,000 pilot to help people reduce their food waste, promote healthy and sustainable eating and recycle unavoidable food waste. This is partly because of the success of our existing food waste scheme. The pilot, Transforming City Food Habits for Life, led by Resource London, includes a programme of events this autumn to help people waste less and recycle more.

Next year the borough’s homes will be supplied with wheelie bins for household waste and recycling. Merton residents will have a similar system to that used by many councils around the country, where the scheme has seen a significant rise in recycling. While you won’t see changes for more than a year, four things to know about the service are:
- Wheelie bins will be introduced in October 2018.
- Residents will be supplied with two wheelie bins, one for household waste and one for paper and card recycling. The existing green recycling boxes will still be used for plastic, glass, cartons and cans.
- Food waste will be collected weekly.
- Household waste and dry recyclable items will be collected on alternate weeks.
Shop smarter

Cut your food waste footprint by shopping smarter. To help you, here are four things from Love Food Hate Waste to do now:

1. Meet your coolest friends
Knowing exactly what’s in your fridge is the key to cutting waste. Keep a check on use-by dates and freeze anything you won’t have time to eat.

2. Find out what’s in store
Keep your store cupboard stocked with dried and canned essentials such as rice, pulses and sauces, which you can use to make the most of your leftovers.

3. Prep perfect portions
Get to know how much your family will eat in a serving of rice, pasta or potatoes and keep to that measure each time – a mug of rice should serve four adults.

4. Love your leftovers
Lots of food actually tastes better the second time around so don’t waste your leftovers. Freeze what you don’t use as a ready meal. There’s lots you can do with a Sunday roast, from curries to salads. See the Love Food Hate Waste website for more ideas, including ice lollies made from frozen bananas!

Spot the difference

We’re still working with caretakers across the borough to keep bin areas tidy and make it easier for people in flats to recycle their waste. Here’s one of the estates to get the treatment. Miles Road in Mitcham is looking a lot nicer and recycling rates are up too!

Report it online

Only 0.01% of refuse collections are missed, but if there is a problem please report it within 48 hours of your scheduled collection so we can return for it: merton.gov.uk/report-it

Garden waste

Merton residents can receive fortnightly garden waste collections from the council for £70 a year. You can join the scheme at any time and collections take place throughout the year.

Reuse, restore, repair

Being clever with food can save you pounds, but the same can be said for clothes, gadgets and household items too. Throughout the rest of 2017 we’ll be helping you breathe new life into things that might otherwise have ended up at the tip. With Resource London, we’ll be organising a jumble trail where you can swap and give away once-loved items. There will also be a sewing day when you can learn to mend or up-cycle last year’s fashions.

Find out more

For rubbish and recycling including food waste visit merton.gov.uk/waste
For garden waste visit merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 020 8274 4902 For tips and recipes visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com
Win four tickets to see The Tiger Who Came to Tea at New Wimbledon Theatre this September!

Following a smash-hit West End season, the tea-guzzling tiger is back on the road in a musical play adapted and directed by David Wood, based on the book by Judith Kerr, and he’s coming to New Wimbledon Theatre!

The doorbell rings just as Sophie and her mummy are sitting down to tea. Who could it possibly be? What they certainly don’t expect to see at the door is a big, stripy tiger!

This delightful family show is packed with oodles of magic, sing-a-long songs and clumsy chaos! A stunning stage adaptation of the classic tale of teatime mayhem...expect to be surprised!

David Wood OBE is undisputedly the country’s leading writer and director of plays and musicals for children. His many successes include The Gingerbread Man, BFG, The Witches, Meg and Mog, Spot and Babe the Sheep Pig.

What animal turns up in time for tea? 

a) Lion b) Tiger c) Leopard

In your answer, you must include the following: name, email address, phone number and postal address. You can email your answer to communications@merton.gov.uk or write to us at My Merton, 7th floor, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX. The closing date for entries is 11 August 2017.

Terms and conditions: *Tickets are non-transferable. No cash alternatives, accommodation or travel included in this prize. The competition is for one group ticket (four tickets) to see The Tiger Who Came To Tea at New Wimbledon Theatre, valid at any performance between 8 and 10 September.

★★★★ “This Tiger is the cat’s meow” The Times
★★★★ “A rare and grrreat achievement” Mail on Sunday

Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough  •  Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough  •  Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough

We host two information events each month, call us today for a friendly chat 0208 545 4070 / 0800 073 0874
Helping Merton’s children

Some children struggle in school and this can be for a number of reasons. Schools call on our team of expert educational psychologists to support children and their families to help them achieve their full potential. My Merton speaks to two of the team.

“We love our jobs,” says Dr Méadbh Ni Fhoighil. “I can’t imagine doing anything else.” Along with colleague Dr Brigid O’Leary, she is one of Merton Council’s 13 educational psychologists who work with children and young people aged 0–25 years across the borough.

Schools call on educational psychologists when children and young people are struggling to make progress. This can be because of a special educational need, difficult family circumstances, a mental health issue or a combination of things. Working with children to get to the root of their issues can be a slow process, but for both Méadbh and Brigid, ultimately highly rewarding.

“We work with children to help them reach their potential – that can be with individuals and small groups or more strategically to help a school make improvements for everyone’s benefit,” says Brigid.

Educational psychologists keep up with the latest academic research in this fast-changing field, on the impact of social media on mental health for example. They also work with teaching staff so they can implement good practice.

“We run group interventions as well seeing individual children. For example, we’ve run transition groups around moving to secondary school for the most vulnerable pupils,” says Méadbh.

The council is required by law to provide educational psychological advice for children with complex special education needs. Schools can also commission the service from the council. There is a high level of demand and schools prioritise pupils in greatest need.

To qualify as an educational psychologist you’ll need a good psychology degree, practical experience and a three-year doctorate. While Méadbh and Brigid studied together, they came into the profession from very different routes. Méadbh was a primary school teacher interested in special needs and using her psychology degree. Brigid was an economist, also working with young offenders, who wanted to work in education full-time. “Education makes such a difference to people’s lives and what they can achieve. I’m really passionate about helping people get more out of it,” she said.

And as for personal qualities? “You need to be open minded, and approach each young person’s situation without bias,” says Méadbh.

“We rely on children and young people to work with us, complete strangers, every day, so you have to be able to make the connection. You need those natural rapport-building skills.”

According to Méadbh: “It’s very easy to focus on what children can’t do. We focus on what they can do and what they want to do.”

“I was working with a young person with a diagnosis of autism who was struggling socially. The one thing he wanted was for his peers to understand him. Once we established that he had an opportunity to speak for himself and people had an opportunity to find out more about him, he turned a corner. Suddenly, he didn’t have to change anything about himself anymore, he felt that people understood him better.”
Join Merton’s growing army of volunteers

Merton has a thriving volunteer scene with more than 40,000 of you giving your time on a regular basis each year and many others pitching in for one-off projects. My Merton meets Sarah Hannigan from Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC) to find out more about volunteering opportunities in the borough.

We’re lucky in Merton to have a thriving voluntary sector. A significant number of you help out with everything from befriending older people at home to mentoring youngsters and protecting the environment through sustainability projects.

Sarah told us: “There are 394 registered charities in Merton, with many more small community groups. Almost half of them rely entirely on volunteers, with no paid employees at all. In our recent State of the Voluntary Sector report, 49% of local charities reported an increase in the number of people coming forward to volunteer for them in the past three years.”

Obviously your commitment to volunteering has major benefits for the organisations you help. But there are plenty of positive effects for volunteers too; from boosting your CV and helping you find paid work, to introducing you to new friends and improving your wellbeing.

Here are just a few ideas

● Help our Home Visits Library Service deliver books to people who are housebound and maybe stay for a cup of tea and a chat?
● Befriend a vulnerable 10 or 11-year-old and help them through the tricky transition to secondary school with the charity Jigsaw4U
● Become a Sustainable Merton Community Champion and help with litter picks, community gardening, watering young trees, and talking to residents about cutting energy costs.
● Find out about latest volunteering opportunities by browsing the MVSC website www.volunteermerton.org.uk, where you can also find details of monthly volunteer recruitment sessions. Alternatively call 020 8685 1771 or drop in Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm at Vestry Hall, Mitcham CR4 3UD.

Fayre & Square is a volunteering retail initiative that has been offering training placements to young adults with learning disabilities since 2013. The eight-week programme, in a shop selling handmade arts and crafts, provides a stepping stone to further volunteering or paid employment. More than 60 young people have completed placements, including 23-year-old Matt who said: “Volunteering at Fayre & Square has given me more confidence in dealing with customers and people I don’t know. I have learnt new skills and enjoyed working as part of a team. I have also made lots of new friends. I now have three jobs!” We are looking for volunteers to help us run Fayre & Square and support our young learners – contact MVCS to find out more.
Action on childhood obesity

An estimated 4,500 primary-aged children in Merton are overweight or obese. In our annual report, Tackling Childhood Obesity Together, the council’s Director of Public Health, Dr Dagmar Zeuner says childhood obesity is a complex problem and there is no single solution. We all have a part to play in tackling the influences, addressing the consequences of childhood obesity and changing the situation.

Find out more about how work with catering companies and running or walking a Daily Mile in schools are helping: merton.gov.uk/annualpublichealthreport

Healthy little teeth

Public Health England says that almost a quarter of five-year-olds have tooth decay and tooth decay is also the most common reason for hospital admissions among children aged five to nine. The good news is tooth decay is preventable and the main message is visit your dentist. NHS dental treatment is free for children under 18, so make sure you register with a dentist as soon as baby’s first tooth appears.

Top tips

- Help brush your child’s teeth twice a day, until they are at least seven-years-old.
- Brush twice a day, usually first thing in the morning and last thing at night.
- Use a smear of toothpaste for the under-threes and a pea-sized blob for children aged three to six.
- Children should spit out toothpaste after brushing, but no rinsing as this washes away the active ingredient of toothpaste.
- Reduce the amount and frequency of sugar your child eats, including sweetened drinks, fruit juices, sweets, biscuits and cakes, and make sure they avoid all sugary products at bedtime.

Cleaner air for Merton

In response to a national health emergency and the mayor of London’s pledge to cut air pollution in the capital, we’re taking action to improve air quality.

Keep an eye open for car clubs we’re introducing to the borough, as well as a growing network of charging points for electric cars. We’re also bringing in more on-street cycle parking facilities to make it easier to travel by bike. We’re phasing in a diesel levy over the next three years and have reduced the resident parking permit charge for electric vehicles to £25 per year to encourage people to move away from diesel, towards less polluting vehicles.

Want to quit smoking?

Once you stop you’ll quickly notice the difference – in your breathing, taste buds and even your wallet! Family and friends will also benefit from no more second hand smoke. You’re four times more likely to successfully stop smoking with the right help and support – and this is all available locally.

Friendly advisers are on hand to help you manage your cravings and give advice on suitable medication. For more information, visit: www.oneyoumerton.gov.uk or call: 020 8973 3545. Alternatively, why not try the free app: NHS Smokefree.

One You goes local

For more than a year now, the NHS One You campaign has been leading the nation’s adults in the fight for better health. With nifty quizzes, top tips and practical information, it’s a good way to start making lifestyle improvements – whether losing weight, being more active, stopping smoking, drinking less alcohol or feeling less stressed.

Now the campaign has gone local with the launch of the One You Merton website. You can still take the personalised quiz, but your answers will take you to sources of help right on your doorstep. Visit the website, do the quiz and download an app for the full range of support.

Want to try the free app? NHS Smokefree.

To find an NHS dentist visit www.nhs.uk/dentists

Healthy little teeth

Holy Trinity School doing the daily mile

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Want to try the free app? NHS Smokefree.

To find an NHS dentist visit www.nhs.uk/dentists
Rose was born in 1875 in Brixton to French parents. Highly educated, she studied modern languages at Royal Holloway College, although she was never awarded a degree as women weren’t allowed to graduate.

Aged 25, Rose married a 50-year-old widower and Chancery Lane solicitor Thomas Lamartine Yates, but despite the age difference it was very much a marriage of equals. In 1906 the pair moved into a 20-room property Dorset Hall on Kingston Road, Merton Park and in 1908 their only son Paul was born.

In 1908 Rose joined the newly established Wimbledon branch of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU). This was affiliated to the national WSPU, founded by Emmeline Pankhurst. Both Rose and her husband Tom campaigned in favour of Votes for Women.

Rose was arrested in 1909 when a peaceful deputation to Westminster was broken up by police. Her young son Paul was still just a baby. She was imprisoned for 28 days; conditions were harsh, with little food and poor sanitation. In court she said: “I have a little son, eight months old, and his father and I decided, after calm consideration, that when that boy grew up he might ask: ‘What did you do mother, in the days of the women’s agitation, to lay women’s grievances before the Prime Minister, and I should blush if I had to say I made no attempt to go to the Prime Minister.’”

In 1910 she became Organising Secretary and Treasurer of the Wimbledon WSPU, which flourished under her leadership. “Meetings, marches, lectures and fundraising events were held and the group opened a WSPU shop in Victoria Crescent, near the current Odeon Cinema site in Wimbledon. Dorset Hall was used to nurse suffragettes recuperating after imprisonment and Tom Lamartine Yates provided the suffragettes with legal advice. In 1913 huge crowds of people attended a major WSPU rally on Wimbledon Common.

After the outbreak of World War 1, the WSPU suspended its activities and the Wimbledon branch contributed to the war effort by organising two soup kitchens, providing hot meals twice a day to the needy.

In November 1918, women over 30 were given the vote for the first time. Rose was elected to represent North Lambeth on the London County Council and used her position to champion issues including equal pay, nursery education and better housing.

In her later years Rose was involved in the fight for women’s equality worldwide through her work with the League of Nations. She also established a collection of suffragette memorabilia which can now be seen at the Women’s Library, part of the London School of Economics and Political Science. She died at the family home in Putney in 1954.
Green light for High Path Estate

Merton Council has approved the first stage of the High Path Estate regeneration in South Wimbledon. Work will begin with the demolition of disused buildings and garages. The demolition will make way for seven residential blocks containing 134 energy-efficient new homes. The High Path project is part of a billion-pound redevelopment, which also includes the Eastfields (Mitcham) and Ravensbury (Morden) estates.

Progress with Wimbledon AFC stadium

A new, 20,000-seat football stadium for local team AFC Wimbledon will start to become a reality later this year, following final legal agreements between the council and the developers. The scheme, on the former Wimbledon Greyhound site on Plough Lane, will also include 600 new homes and a fitness club.

The council granted planning permission for the scheme in December 2015, a decision which received approval from the Mayor of London and Department for Communities and Local Government last summer.
Spend more time in your garden and less time at the local tip.

GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

Have your garden waste collected from your home every two weeks for £70 per year. That’s just £2.69 per collection!

Visit merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 020 8274 4902 for details and to sign up.
Merton says NO MORE

Remember that domestic abuse doesn’t always mean physical violence, but is often about psychologically controlling behaviour (coercive control) that leaves a victim isolated. Merton’s One Stop Shop is the place to go for help and advice – Mondays 9.30am to 12.30pm at Morden Baptist Church, SM4 5BL (closed bank holidays). Or call Victim Support 020 7801 1777 or the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247. 999 if you are in danger.

Safe as houses

Summer can be prime time for burglars so take extra care with security when enjoying the warm weather or heading off on holiday. Lock windows and doors when you go out or are in the garden.

If you’re going away, use timer switches on lights. Cancel deliveries and ask a friend to move any post out of sight. Make sure your shed is secure with strong padlocks and lock up bikes inside the home.

Look out for your bike

Motorbikes and scooters have become hot property among London thieves with a significant increase in thefts. As cars become more difficult to steal, motorbikes are being taken for their high value and being used for fast getaways in crimes, including street robberies.

If you have a motorbike or scooter, make sure you lock it securely at all times and have it marked with your vehicle identification number and your postcode. Report all thefts and suspicious activity to the police – any information you give will be treated in confidence.
Anytime Fitness Raynes Park
14-16 Coombe Lane, Raynes Park, London, SW20 8ND
0203 7456665
raynespark@anytimefitness.co.uk

24 HOUR FITNESS CLUB

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR
FREE TRIAL PASS

ANYTIMEFITNESS.CO.UK
Latest on your libraries

Merton’s award-winning libraries are flourishing among young readers with libraries being used by more residents than ever before. *My Merton* takes a closer look at the borough’s libraries.

It’s great that so many children are visiting their local library. Research shows that children who enjoy books outside school are more likely to be reading above expected levels, improving their literacy skills and life chances later on.

One thing getting children through the doors has been a council scheme to issue library cards via each of our primary schools. A similar project will soon be running in secondary schools, thanks to a £142k grant from the Arts Council England to fund a cultural programme for 11 to 18-year-olds. Young people will be encouraged to read and review 10 books a year in exchange for prizes and incentives. There will also be arts workshops resulting in exhibitions and performances on the theme of My Library.

**Merton Arts Space**
This new space has been up and running in Wimbledon Library for almost a year now, providing a cultural hub in the heart of the town. The flexible venue was developed after another successful Arts Council bid and uses part of the library originally built as a stand-alone theatre in the 19th century.

A diverse programme has featured Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* and, on 1 July, Jah Wobble, the legendary bass guitarist, singer and poet who rose to fame in the band Public Image Ltd. Check out Merton’s website for future events, including author talks, bands and exhibitions. If you have an idea for an event in the space, please contact us.

**Animal Antics**
If you’re aged four to 11, summer in the library can only mean one thing – the Summer Reading Challenge, which launches this year on 7 July. Illustrated by Tony Ross, of Horrid Henry fame, this year’s challenge has the theme *Animal Antics*. As usual, children are invited to read six books during the summer break and in return collect stickers and medals. In Merton, every child taking part is entered in a prize draw to win giveaways such as tablets, vouchers and meals out. And if you’re aged 14+ we’d love you to help us run the programme.

**Join our band of volunteers**
Merton’s award-winning library service has been such a success thanks to the amazing commitment of our volunteers of all ages. Our volunteers keep libraries running by meeting and greeting, stacking shelves and solving IT issues. If you’d like to join the team, please get in touch now.

**New library opening this year**
Colliers Wood’s brand new library will be opening this winter. With three floors of library space, the building will include a coffee shop, children’s area, meeting rooms and loads of lovely books! There’s sure to be a grand opening – check our social media for the latest.

**find out more**
merton.gov.uk/libraries
Fly-tippers and those who pay fly-tippers

The residents of Merton and Merton Council are always on the look out and regularly report offenders. You may have already been seen and reported and could receive an unlimited fine and/or imprisonment.

If you see fly-tipping report the offence online at:

merton.gov.uk/flytipping
**Arts and entertainment**

- **Morden Park Choral Society**
  Saturday 8 July, 7.30pm
  Animal Crackers including Captain Noah and his floating zoo.
  St John the Divine Church, High Path, Wimbledon. Tickets £6 or £4 including glass of wine or soft drink.
  find out more
  020 8648 6445;
  www.choralsocietymerton.org.uk

- **Singing course**
  19 September–
  25 November, Tuesday nights, 7.30–8.45pm
  Katriona’s Singing Studio, Wimbledon, SW20 0SS.
  Course fee: £110 early bird discount (£120 later). Nine week singing course plus show night. Limited places available. All levels focus on your singing over nine weekly sessions in a fun, dynamic group. Build confidence and experience, learn group and solo vocal skills, plus there’s a show night where you get the opportunity to perform in a public venue with a live accompanist – invite your friends and family too.
  Repertoire covered: Jazz, Pop, Gospel and Musical Theatre. Singers can do as much or as little solo singing as they wish on the course.
  find out more
  Contact Katriona Taylor on 07773 127922;
  info@katrionataylor.com

- **New Wimbledon Theatre**
  93 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1QG
  Book online www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon
  Telephone booking 0844 871 7646
  Group bookings 0844 871 7696
  Access bookings 0844 871 7677 (no booking fees apply)

- **Titus Andronicus – RSC Live**
  Wednesday 9 August, 7pm
  Tickets: £15–£17.50 (no booking fees)
  Join us in our Studio Theatre for a live screening of Titus Andronicus. The decay of Rome reaches violent depths in Shakespeare’s bloody play. Titus, exhausted by war and loss, relinquishes power but leaves Rome in disorder. This gory revenge tragedy presents us with murder as entertainment, and, as the body count piles up, poses questions about the nature of sexuality, family, class and society.

- **Joe McElderry – The Gloria Tour**
  Saturday 19 August, 7.30pm
  Tickets: £22.90–£43.40 plus £2.85 booking fee. Theatre card members: £20–£40.50 no booking fee. This summer, No.1 and platinum selling artist Joe McElderry releases his long awaited new album *Saturday Night at the Movies*. The album includes iconic songs from stage and screen and will also feature Joe’s hotly anticipated new single, *Gloria*, available this March. Joe McElderry is coming to The New Wimbledon Theatre with special guests X Factor’s Lloyd Daniels and Any Dream Will Do runners up Keith Jack and Ben James-Ellis. Full of classic songs you’ll be singing along to as well as brand new tracks to fall in love with.

- **Stage Experience – Bugsy Malone**
  Performances
  Friday 25–Saturday 26 August, 7.30pm and Saturday matinee 2pm
  Be prepared to be dazzled by New Wimbledon Theatre’s mammoth production of Alan Parker’s smash hit musical *Bugsy Malone*. With a cast of over sixty of the country’s brightest young performers and direction from Kate McGregor, Artistic Director of award-winning Theatre6, this is *Bugsy Malone* as you’ve never seen it before. Set in prohibition New York, *Bugsy Malone* tells the story of rival gang leaders Fat Sam and Dandy Dan in their fight for turf. Dandy Dan and his top of the range splurge guns are winning the war and a desperate Fat Sam calls on smooth talking ex-boxer Bugsy for help. As the custard pies start flying relationships are tested and allegiances questioned. A show for all the family, this much loved hit promises to be a blast and should not be missed!

- **Wimbledon Park Food Festival**
  Saturday 26–Monday 28 August
  find out more
  www.fantasticbritishfoodfestivals.com

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**What's on**

Your comprehensive guide to what’s happening in Merton. merton.gov.uk/events

**Arts & entertainment • Youth • Senior Citizens • Family • Health & Fitness • Walks & Talks • Fairs & Exhibitions**

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**Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough** • Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough • Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough
**Dead in the Dark**
by Stephen Booth

Ten years ago, Reece Bower was accused of killing his wife, a crime he always denied. Extensive police searches found no trace of Annette Bower and the case against him collapsed. But now the investigation has been resurrected for Detective Inspector Ben Cooper – because Reece Bower himself has disappeared, and his new wife wants answers.

**Other books:**
- *A Perfect Husband* – Hilary Boyd
- *Lizzie’s War* – Rosie Clarke
- *The Fallen* – Ace Atkins

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**The Borrowers**
Until Sunday 20 August

Main Stage. A Play by Charles Way, based on the book by Mary Norton. The timeless classic bursts onto Polka’s Main Stage this summer with dazzling puppetry, original music, stunning design and plenty of suspense. Arietty has lived her whole life deep beneath the floorboards, dreaming of the great outdoors. When her father Pod finally brings her upstairs to learn the tricks of borrowing, Arietty meets a human boy. But their friendship risks everything and the ‘human beans’ soon discover the borrowers’ secret world... it’s time to escape! Join us for a fantastical adventure as the heroic Arietty and her family embark on an action-packed journey to find somewhere new to call home.

**Hatch**
Friday 7 July–Sunday 27 August

Adventure Theatre. With a sparkling musical score by Brazilian percussionist and composer Adriano Adewale, Polka and The Royal Opera bring you the perfect introduction to music and theatre. Hatch follows the extraordinary journey of an egg through different sensory worlds, each bursting with a mesmerising blend of sights and sounds. From flowing water and whistling winds, to the beautiful call of a bird and a voyage through the clouds, we discover new sounds in unlikely places. Join the egg and lend a helping hand, as it finally reaches its resting place, ready to hatch.

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**St Mark’s Church of England Academy**

- **10th anniversary community fair**
  Saturday 15 July, midday–4pm
  Free. St. Mark’s Church of England Academy, Acacia Road, Mitcham, CR4 1SF.
  A special community fair to mark 10 years of St. Mark’s Academy. For all the local community to enjoy and find out more about the amazing things happening at St. Mark’s.
Walks and talks

**Mitcham evening walk**
Friday 14 July, 7–8.30pm
Mitcham Junction Station. Free. A gentle three to four hour stroll around Mitcham Common and Canons. Finish at Park Place.

Call Melanie on 07944 833605

**Merton Mencap**
Adults First Mental Capacity, Lasting Power of Attorney (LPAs) and Deputyships explained
Tuesday 4 July, 10am–midday
High Path Community Resource Centre, 63 High Path, South Wimbledon SW19 2JY. Free. With Sarah Sarwar, Senior Associate with Morrisons Solicitors, Wimbledon. For carers of adults with a learning disability. If a person lacks the ability to make a decision then their mental capacity is questioned. Sarah will explain the principles around mental capacity and what you need to consider. She will talk about LPAs, the appointment of someone to make a decision on behalf of another person and how they can be used.

Sarah will also discuss Deputyships, where someone is appointed by the Court of Protection to make decisions for another person who lacks mental capacity.

**Wandle Fortnight**
Saturday 9–Sunday 24 September
The annual celebration of the Wandle begins during Heritage Open Day and runs until World Rivers Day.

**Southside House tours**
Open 2–5pm until the end of September
3 Woodhayes Road, Wimbledon, SW19 4RJ. Maintained in traditional style without intrusive refurbishment and crowded with family possessions of centuries, Southside offers a wealth of fascinating family stories. This magical house and gardens can inspire the unusual, adventurous and unexpected.

- Adults £9, students £7.50, families £20. Guided tours on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays and bank holiday afternoons at 2, 3.30 and 4pm. Gates open 20 minutes before each tour. Visitors can book and pay for tours online.

**Kids First**

- **SEN update**
  Monday 3 July, 10am-midday
  Chaucer Centre, Room J, Canterbury Road, Morden, SM4 6PX. Free. For parents of children and young people with disabilities or special needs. With Karla Finikin, Merton’s Head of SEN and Disability (SENDIS). An opportunity to discuss SEN issues. Come along and ask your questions.

- **Talk autism**
  Thursday 6 July, 10am-midday
  Chaucer Centre, Room D, Canterbury Road, Morden SM4 6PX. Free. Merton’s Forum for parents/carers of children, young people and adults with autism. Obsessions and compulsions. Learn how to deal with mild or severe repetitive routines and rituals. Information and advice with Dr Sally Morgan, Clinical Psychologist.

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**find out more**
www.southsidehouse.com; 020 8946 7643
Health and fitness

- **Free tennis coaching for children and adults**
  Every Saturday afternoon 1pm and 3pm
  Tamworth Farm Recreation Ground, London Road, Mitcham CR4 3LA.
  Every Saturday morning 10am–midday
  Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, Martin Way, Morden SM4 4AR.
  find out more
  [tennisforfree.co.uk](http://tennisforfree.co.uk)

- **Merton Park Bowling Club**
  Enjoy a free come and try bowling evening every Wednesday until the end of August from 6pm.
  John Innes Park.
  find out more
  [www.tennisforfree.co.uk](http://www.tennisforfree.co.uk)

- **Merton Bowling Club**
  We’re looking for new members. Come and join us at Joseph Hood Recreation Ground any Tuesday afternoon at 1.30pm or contact our club captain, Duncan Edwell, for a private bowling session at
  D.edwell04@btinternet.com
  find out more
  020 8641 8070; 07971 582695

- **Social run with Wimbledon Windmilers**
  Sundays 10am
  Windmill car park, Windmill Road, Wimbledon SW19 5NQ.
  Annual membership £34
  – try up to four sessions for free. Come for a social run with Wimbledon Windmilers running club – choose from three, five or seven miles, with stops. If you have already started running on your own or with a beginners’ group, this is a great way to build up your distance and meet other runners.
  find out more
  Call Claire on 07903 973222; [www.windmilers.org.uk](http://www.windmilers.org.uk)

- **Headway South West London**
  Monthly meetings held on the second Tuesday of the month 7.30–9pm
  Drake House, 44 St George’s Road, Wimbledon. Our Wimbledon support group offers adults with a brain injury and those who care for them information, activities and the opportunity to share experiences with others who are facing similar challenges.
  find out more
  [www.headwayswlondon.org](http://www.headwayswlondon.org)

- **Wimbledon Park Bowling Club**
  until 23 September
  Wimbledon Park, will be holding taster/coaching sessions from 11am–12.30pm each Saturday.
  For all of the above sessions all equipment will be provided, please wear flat shoes and comfortable clothing.
Family events

- **Sherwood Primary School PTA summer fair**
  Saturday 1 July
  midday–3pm
  Abbots Road, Mitcham
  Surrey, CR4 1JP (Castleton Gate). Adults 50p, children free. Games, face-painting, cake sales, sweet stall, food, dance and jewellery workshops, plus lots more!

- **The Priory School “Game, Set & Match” summer fair**
  Saturday 8 July,
  11am–2pm
  Queens Road, Wimbledon
  SW19 8LX. Adults £1, children free. Freedom passes £10 for unlimited rides. The Priory School’s tennis themed summer fair with fairground rides, barbecue, bar, stalls, games, crafts, tombola, raffle and more.

  [find out more](jecclestone@wildlondon.org.uk)

- **Mitcham Horticultural Society’s Summer Show**
  Saturday 1 July, 2pm
  St Mark’s Church Hall,
  St Mark’s Rd, Mitcham.
  Free. Refreshments available. This colourful show will be full of roses, sweet peas, geraniums and fuchsias, all displayed at their best. Photo right shows: Sandra Vickers, Paula Bailey, Bob Vickers, Gordon Adams, looking very happy with their winning exhibits.

- **Big Screen Tennis**
  Monday 3–Sunday 16 July, midday–9pm
  The Piazza (outside Morrisons and Odeon Cinema), Wimbledon Broadway. Free. Love Wimbledon’s Big Screen is back this summer to show their favourite sporting event, the Wimbledon Championships. No costs and no queues; pull up a deckchair, grab a bite to eat and soak up the sun whilst watching the world’s tennis giants battle it out on Centre Court.

- **Family fun day**
  Saturday 8 July,
  starts midday
  Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Field,
  KT3 6NF. Cost: donation. Friends of Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Field are hosting a fitness themed fun day for all the Family. There will be interactive displays, stalls, bouncy castles, and much more.

  [find out more](www.friendsofsjh.org; contactus@friendsofsjh.org)

- **Morden Family Fun Day**
  Sunday 16 July
  Morden Park. Adults £2, under 14s free – all profits donated to local charities and organisations. Great day out for all the family. Go-carts, pony rides, Zumba, live music, classic cars and a licensed bar. Just some of the treats in store at this year’s fun day.

  [find out more](www.mordenfunday.org; andybutcher64@yahoo.co.uk)
Merton Council foster information meetings
Wednesday:
5 July 10.30am
19 July 6.30pm
2 August 10.30am
23 August 6.30pm
6 September 10.30am
Morden Baptist Church,
Crown Lane, SM4 5BL.
Could you Foster? We will talk about what fostering is, the assessment process, impact on family life, support, training, payments and much more. Come along to one of our events and meet the team, as well as experienced Merton foster carers and get a real feel for fostering.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/fostering
020 8545 4070
fostering@merton.gov.uk

Pretty muddy London – Morden Park
Saturday 3 September from 10am
Cancer Research UK’s Race for life is a series of women-only events raising money for research into all 200 types of cancer. Why not take part in this great 5k event in the beautiful surroundings of Morden Park. Adult: £19.99.

find out more
https://raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org/

BookFest
Tickets for this year’s BookFest go online on 1 July. As usual, there is a line-up of great talks from many famous names, including Salman Rushdie, Tracy Chevalier, Judy Murray, Liz Earle, Anthony Horowitz, Ali Smith, Chris Patten and many more.

find out more
wimbledonbookfest.org

The Siegeris School of Dance
Wimbledon, Wimbledon Park, South Wimbledon, Raynes Park, Mitcham, Tooting

Email to register your FREE TRIAL

Dance classes for ages between / Boys, Girls and Adults
Monday - Saturday
* Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) Ballet
* ISTD Modern & Tap
* Street Dance & Musical Theatre
siegerisdance.com
info@siegerisdance.com
07730536499

Loads of holiday fun
right on your doorstep
merton.gov.uk/activekids
Now open in Wimbledon Library
A new multi-function arts and cultural space that can hold up to 300 people. Upcoming events include theatre, comedy nights, live music, dance and talks.
Foster carer Mani Gakwaya

Mani Gakwaya has been a foster carer for five years, during which she’s looked after 15 children aged 12 to 18. We caught up with her for a quick chat about the highs and lows of fostering teens.

Why did you become a foster carer?
My children had grown up and moved away. I have space and I know there are so many children who need help.

What’s it like fostering teenagers?
It’s got its rewards and challenges but overall we do really enjoy fostering teenagers! When children come to us they don’t want to engage with everyday life – the things people do like going to college or having dinner round the dining table. When you get over that and see them really enjoying family life, that’s very rewarding. When they move out, no matter how many challenges you’ve had with them, it’s heartbreaking. It’s nice when they come back or pick up the phone to ask you ‘what should I do in this situation?’ That makes me really happy.

What support is there from the council?
We get loads of training. The other thing I really like is that you can pick up the phone any time and speak to someone. That makes our job easy. We have a support group as well, the Fostering Network. We meet and share our experiences.

What qualities do you need to be a foster carer?
You need to be caring, tolerant, patient and non-judgmental. You have to be willing to share your space because they have to feel that your home is their home. And be a very good listener!

find out more
merton.gov.uk/fostering

minutes with...