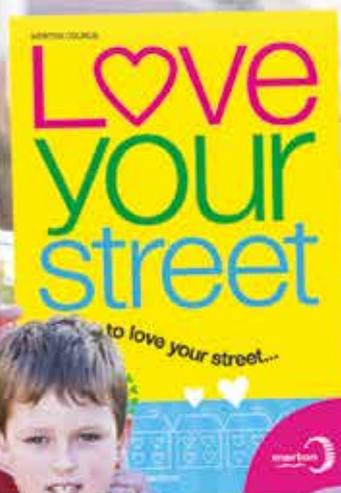


news and information from your council

my merton

Council
tax frozen
yet
again!



Pledge to Love Your Street

Residents give council best ever scores

Providing value for money in tough times



We asked

Every year we ask 1,000 local residents about what issues most concern them.

"You said"

For many years the level of council tax has been one of the issues that residents have been most concerned about but in 2014 concern about council tax dropped to an all-time low, no doubt as a result of the council's four year council tax freeze. Although people are happy about how the council deals with litter, with good satisfaction levels for our waste services in the 2014 Annual Residents' Survey, concern about people dropping litter on our streets has increased. There has also been an increase in concern about traffic congestion.

We did:

Once again we are freezing council tax this year, for the fifth year in a row, and we are pleased to see that residents recognise the value for money we offer. However, we understand that how our streets look and feel is important to our residents and we want to work with you to make Merton a cleaner and safer place. To do this we will not shy away from taking action against the small minority who spoil it for everyone else. To help we are:

- Extending our successful pilot of increased enforcement against litter louts
- Continuing to prosecute fly-tippers whenever we can
- Trialling wheeled bins in a small number of streets in Mitcham to see if they result in a reduction of litter on the street
- Introducing automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras at key junctions to deter drivers from causing congestion
- Improving cycling facilities in Wimbledon, Colliers Wood and Mitcham so that fewer drivers take to the road

What you can do to help:

- Always dispose of your litter responsibly
- If a public bin is full, please take your litter home with you
- When you see litter or fly-tipping, report it to us
- To reduce congestion, why not use the bike for short journeys – free adult cycle training is available; see merton.gov.uk/adultcycling

🔗 find out more

Page 10 for more about what we're doing to tackle congestion

Page 11 for information about our new anti-litter campaign

Page 13 for more about fly-tipping and the wheeled bin trial

Cover: Launch of the Love Your Street campaign.
Photograph by Paul Tanner Photography.



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

I loved my birthday when I was a kid. My mum always made a cake and I got to stay up late watching TV. As I've got a bit older I sometimes prefer to forget another year has passed!

But there's one birthday that I definitely don't want to miss. That's Merton's birthday. Yes, Merton is exactly 50 years old this year. The borough was set up in 1965 and we'll be celebrating the occasion all year long.

Back in the 1960s the average house price was a mere £2,530, a loaf of bread cost 5p and a season ticket to see Manchester United cost just £8.50!

Things have changed a lot since then and I know for many of us the weekly shopping bill seems to keep going up and bus and tube fares get higher and higher. Like many of my neighbours in Morden, I also worry that my kids will struggle to afford a home locally.

That's why we've frozen your council tax again this year. This is the fifth year in a row we've frozen council tax. We know living in London is expensive and we want to help you manage your budget.

I'm a businessman and I've been really keen to make the council more business-like and efficient so that it's affordable for you.

However, you will have seen on the TV and in the newspapers that the government have cut the funding for local councils by 40%. The council is faced with having to make £32 million of cuts. But we've done this in a business-like way.

We've made sure that children's services and adult social care get a lower share of the cuts. And we've protected services you value most such as libraries and the weekly refuse collection. Unlike some other councils, we've also kept all our children's centres and all our day centres open.

It won't be easy for us to continue to keep the council affordable and to protect the services you need most. But I'm convinced our business-like approach will always give you value for money and key services you can rely on. So there is still a lot to celebrate in this 50th year of Merton borough!

Stephen Alambritis

contents

My Merton is published by the London Borough of Merton and is distributed free to households in the borough four times a year.

The editorial content of *My Merton* is produced by the London Borough of Merton's Communications Team
Editor of this issue: Sarah Dolly
Feature contributions from Elizabeth Thompson

My Merton is designed by Domino4 01932 988677
Email andrew@domino4.co.uk
www.domino4.co.uk

Printed by Cliffe Enterprise Print Partnership
Contact 0845 601 9478
Email ben@cliffe-enterprise.com
www.cliffe-enterprise.com

My Merton is distributed by London Letterbox.
Contact 020 8940 0666 or log on to www.londonletterbox.co.uk

quick reference
keyservices

Switchboard: 020 8274 4901

Anti-social behaviour hotline: 020 8274 4907

Council tax: 020 8274 4904

Benefits advice: 020 8545 4178

Libraries: 020 8545 3783

Parking: 020 8545 4661

Registering to vote: 020 8545 3407

Waste collection services: 020 8274 4902

contact us

My Merton, Communications, 8th Floor, Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX
Tel 020 8545 3327

Email mymerton@merton.gov.uk
merton.gov.uk/mymerton

What's on listings: 020 8545 3327
whatson@merton.gov.uk

Adverts

For all advertising enquiries contact mymerton@merton.gov.uk

The London Borough of Merton does not accept responsibility for or endorse any products or services offered by advertisers.

My Merton costs only 12p a copy to produce



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

My Merton is printed on fully recyclable paper, which is accredited by the PEFC Council (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes). This edition of *My Merton* is distributed from 13 March.



11

Take the pledge to Love Your Street



9

Annual survey

More 'best ever' scores from Merton residents



16

Budget

Merton Council freezes council tax for fifth year

Community

News

4

The latest news from around the borough

Features

Merton is 50

18

Celebrating 50 years as a London borough

Rejuvenating the Canons

19

£4 million Heritage Lottery Funding for Mitcham

5 minutes with

32

MVSC Chief Executive Khadiru Mahdi

Regulars

Environment

12

Latest on keeping Merton clean and Style Junkies

What's on

25

Your guide to all that's going on in Merton this spring

Don't forget to visit our website!

merton.gov.uk/mymerton



You can also follow us on:



www.facebook.com/mertoncouncil



@Merton_Council



www.flickr.com/mertoncouncil



www.youtube.com/mertoncouncil



Whenever you see this logo that means there's a volunteering opportunity to get involved in

Register to vote and make your voice heard

On Thursday 7 May 2015 there will be a UK Parliamentary General Election and in order for you to take part and have your say, you need to have registered to vote.

The way you can register has changed. A new online system was introduced last year and if your address has changed in the past 12 months, it is now up to you to register

yourself. All you need to register is your National Insurance number, date of birth and your current address. **The deadline to register to vote is Monday 20 April.** If you or a member of your household has changed address in the past year or will be 18 by the election, register now at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

The council is calling on everyone who is eligible to exercise their democratic right to vote in May. Voting is a way to influence who will represent you in the House of Commons for the next four years. Polling stations will be open across the borough in school halls and community centres from 7am to 10pm. **find out more** merton.gov.uk/howtovote



Improve your literacy and numeracy skills

Merton Libraries are calling on adults living in the borough who would like to improve their literacy skills to get reading as part of this year's Six Book Challenge.

Everyone over the age of 16 is eligible and can register through any of Merton's libraries. All those who complete the reading challenge receive a certificate from the Mayor.



Merton's war history set to be carved in stone

An exciting new heritage project called Carved in Stone is set to explore the lives of those commemorated on local memorials around Merton.

Following Merton Council's successful bid to the Heritage

Lottery Fund (HLF) for a grant of £80,900, the Carved in Stone project will explore the lives of Merton residents who served during the First World War, especially those who are commemorated on local memorials and grave markers across the borough.

Several War Story days and

events will be held over the next two years, giving people an opportunity to find out about the role of Merton residents on the Home Front.

find out more merton.gov.uk/CarvedinStone
To volunteer email local.studies@merton.gov.uk
or call 020 8545 3239



Last year's Six Book Challenge award ceremony

Merton Libraries are also supporting the National Numeracy challenge, which is an initiative aimed at reducing the number of adults in the UK with low levels of numeracy.

To find out more about both initiatives visit your local library and talk to one of our champions. **find out more** merton.gov.uk/libraries

Merton is 50

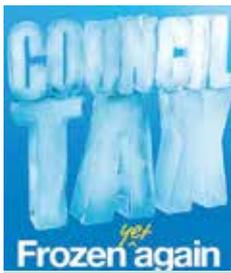
This year is Merton's 50th birthday and community groups can apply for funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for projects to celebrate the borough's anniversary. To find out how you can apply for funding for heritage projects visit www.hlf.org.uk. For information about how Merton is celebrating its golden jubilee, see page 18.



It's quicker online

To contact the council, access services and get the most up to date information on services, it is often best to go online. Visitors consistently rate Merton's website as one of the best in London when it comes to being easy to use. You can buy and renew parking permits, pay council tax, settle up parking tickets, book sports pitches and school holiday activities and much more. It is always worth checking service details online too. In a nutshell, going online is the most efficient way when it comes to dealing with the council and it's much less hassle than using old-fashioned paper.

The council will be working on improving its website further over the coming months as part of its Customer Contact Programme and will be updating residents in future issues of *My Merton*. **find out more** merton.gov.uk



Five years of frozen council tax

Merton has frozen council tax for the fifth year running. The decision follows council agreement at its annual budget meeting in early March when it balanced its budget for 2015-16. The council is also keeping council tax affordable for low income families, despite government cuts to its funding for this.

Merton Council knows many residents are feeling the pinch financially in these tough times and wants to provide affordable services that are also value for money for local people.

Ongoing reductions in funding from the government have made this increasingly difficult, and the council is having to make hard decisions about how it delivers services. But Merton is determined to continue with its business-like approach, focusing its much-reduced resources on those most in need. More information on the council's budget is on pages 16 and 17.

Merton named Best Small Business Borough

Merton has won the award for Best All Round Small Business Friendly Borough in London. This comes on top of previously being named the best achieving council in the country.

The council works hard to help businesses in Merton so that residents, and especially young people, have a better chance of a good local job.

Prudential RideLondon comes to Merton

Merton residents will line the streets of Wimbledon and Raynes Park again this summer to watch thousands of cyclists, many raising funds for charity, taking part in the Prudential RideLondon cycle ride as it passes through the borough on Sunday 2 August.



RideLondon is working with local resident groups and businesses on their plans for this year's event including travelling in and out of the borough on the day, community activities and what they are doing to make the day run smoothly.

find out more
www.PrudentialRideLondon.co.uk

Cranmer Primary School expands



Former Blue Peter presenter Andy Akinwolere officially opened Cranmer Primary School's new building, Cranmer Court, at the start of the year as part of the council's £80 million primary school expansion programme. 2,000 new primary school places have already been created in Merton, with 2,000 more planned.

The new two-tier block will provide 210 new school places for local children with seven extra classrooms and a hall taking the number of places

available up to 630. Cranmer Court is fully accessible with a lift which allows children with disabilities to continue their primary education at the school until year 6. The new building also has a green roof that provides insulation.

Thanks to the council's good financial planning and commitment to give all the borough's young people a good education close to home, it has been able to build new classrooms in seven of Merton's most popular schools this year.



Leader of the council Councillor Stephen Alambritis and Sara Williams and Eric Osei from the council's Future Merton team receive the award from Steve Warwick, London regional chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses

Merton was recognised for its wide range of successful initiatives which support and develop the local small business community. Working with partners including Merton Chamber of Commerce, the council invested over £2 million in high-quality support programmes including the Merton Business Support Service (MBSS), Merton Business Loan Funds and Wimbletech. It has also developed industrial estates and created the Merton Business Directory.

Organised by the London region of The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and London Councils, the awards celebrate projects or initiatives delivered by London boroughs that have had a positive impact on London's small business community.



Merton schools get healthier

Merton's local Healthy Schools programme is being rolled out across 20 Merton schools. The council-funded project will provide health activities, including gardening, food growing projects and personal training programmes, for parents and children. All offer fun ways for families to eat healthily and get active. Information and ideas on how to improve the health and wellbeing of your child are at www.nhs.uk/change4life

Look out for your friends



If you think someone you know might be a victim of domestic

violence and abuse, you could make a life-changing difference by helping them get the right support. To find out more, visit merton.gov.uk/domesticviolence.

Merton's One Stop Shop is a confidential service, available on Mondays from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Morden Baptist Church. At other times call Merton Victim Support on 020 7801 1777 or the National Domestic Violence Helpline on 0808 2000 247. In an emergency call 999.

Working together for healthier communities

Merton GPs and community health champions started a pilot programme earlier this year to help residents in the borough cut smoking and diagnose chronic diseases. The council is keen to increase life expectancy among people from less well-off backgrounds to levels enjoyed elsewhere. This partnership between frontline primary care and Merton's

public health team aims to improve the quality of life of residents and reduce the burden on the health service.

GPs will provide stop smoking services in the community and put residents in touch with the LiveWell health service. Health champions will be trained to screen for chronic diseases and, where appropriate, refer

residents to their GP for further tests. Nine surgeries will share good practice with each other to improve the quality of services for their patients.

If successful, the pilot will expand to other parts of the borough and will include other prevention methods for health conditions.

MERTON COUNCIL



Frozen *yet* again

Merton has frozen council tax for the **fifth** year running

merton.gov.uk/counciltax



Merton shortlisted in four categories at national awards

Merton Council has been shortlisted in four national award categories by the respected Local Government Chronicle.



TV's Angela Rippon at Merton Dementia Hub when it opened

Merton's Dementia Hub alone has been shortlisted in both the Commissioning Pioneer and Business Transformation categories. The first of its kind in London and one of the first in the UK, Merton Council has commissioned the Alzheimer's Society to manage the hub. It is a unique community based service for people with dementia, their family and carers.

Merton's Hoarding Protocol is also the first of its kind in the country and has been shortlisted in the Innovation category. Developed in collaboration with local

partners including Circle Housing Merton Priory, the protocol has helped 25 hoarders since 2013 to enjoy a better quality of life in their own home, reducing the cost to the public purse.

Merton's homelessness prevention work has also been shortlisted in the Business Transformation category. With a track record as the London borough with the lowest number of people in temporary accommodation, Merton teamed up with the DWP to proactively help these households, resulting in over £1 million savings.

Site chosen for Morden's family leisure centre

The ageing swimming pool at Morden Park is set to be replaced by a new, financially-sustainable family leisure centre at a site on the London Road side of Morden Park.



The site has been chosen to ensure that the existing pool can remain open for residents to use while the leisure centre is being built. By locating the new centre on this site, the council can also return the original leisure centre to public green space and keep the impact on the local environment to a minimum.

find out more

merton.gov.uk/leisureformorden

Satisfaction high with Merton Libraries

Satisfaction with the ICT facilities available in Merton Libraries is continuing to grow, according to the latest e-Public Library User Survey (e-PLUS). Focusing on ICT and web services for adults, the survey asked 1,375 library customers how they rate online and IT services available at Merton Libraries with 99% of



customers rating these services as either good (87%) or satisfactory (12%). Responses show that the quality of the services provided and standard of customer care received are highly valued with 100% of customers surveyed rating staff support as either good (84%) or satisfactory (16%).

Since the last e-PLUS, there have been a wide range of improvements made to IT services including upgraded PCs and software, expansion of online resources, free wi-fi, eBooks and eMagazines and IT support

sessions. This is reflected in 72% of respondents saying that the software is up to date. Satisfaction with the speed of the wi-fi provided is also high with an average of 80% of respondents saying that the speed is sufficient.

Small changes locally; lives changed globally

Merton recently celebrated five years as a Fairtrade Borough and has had successful Fairtrade re-accreditation. Everyone can help make a difference by switching to Fairtrade products and supporting its principles of better prices, decent working conditions and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers.

find out more www.fairtrade.org.uk

Much-needed extension for cemetery

London Road Cemetery is being given a much needed extension which will make space for 1,800 new plots. This investment by the council should meet the need for grave space for up to 18 years. Work on the extension begins this month and is due to be completed during the summer.

find out more

merton.gov.uk/cemeteries



Safer cycling

Cycling is great exercise and can often be a quicker way of getting around. But if you're new to cycling, or a bit rusty, feeling safe can be an issue. Merton Council is developing safer cycle routes with £200,000 from the Mayor of London's Major Schemes Funding programme. The council is looking at segregated cycle lanes, changes to junctions to give bikes priority and transforming underused alleyways into cycle links.

Merton Council runs free "Bikeability" cycle training courses for children and adults and sessions for parents in local schools too. We also work with the police to organise Changing Places events where cyclists and lorry drivers can experience the road from each other's point of view and learn more about safe road positioning.

🔗 **find out more** merton.gov.uk/roadsafety
 Email: road.safety@merton.gov.uk

Wish granted for High Path Community Centre



A group of AFC Wimbledon fans from the council's High Path Community Resource Centre had their wish come true thanks to Centre Court Shopping Centre's Wimbledon Wishes project.

The fans met players from AFC Wimbledon and had a penalty shoot-out against one of their favourite players, Adebayo Akinfenwa. Two of the group also got to go to the club's New Malden training ground to catch the end of their training session and meet the players and their manager, Neil Ardley.

London Youth Games

The council is calling on young people to represent Merton at the 38th Balfour Beatty London Youth Games. To register your interest, go to merton.gov.uk/youthgames and the council's leisure team will be in contact with the trial details.



2015 merton civic awards

Nominate a community hero now!

In association with



Having been involved in reporting on life in Merton for over a decade I know what a huge contribution individuals make to this borough.

This community, and the lives of many thousands of people, would be much the poorer without the efforts of an army of unsung heroes who give their time, talent and enthusiasm to help others.

Their role is even more important in these times of austerity when the council and other organisations simply do not have the money to do all that they would like.

They do a huge variety of things week in, week out, without any expectation of reward or recognition.

Which makes it an even bigger pleasure to thank a few more of these wonderful people through the Merton Civic Awards which we first launched in 2013 in partnership with the council.

So if you know someone who is making a contribution to your community please do nominate them for an award now.

Sean Duggan
 Editor, Wimbledon Guardian

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD
 SPONSORED BY AHMADIYYA MUSLIM COMMUNITY



COMMUNITY AWARD
 SPONSORED BY MCDONALDS CENTRE COURT



BUSINESS AWARD
 SPONSORED BY MERTON MEANS BUSINESS



SPORTING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
 SPONSORED BY BETTER.ORG



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT AWARD
 SPONSORED BY BESPOKE PRODUCTIONS



YOUNG PERSON'S ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
 SPONSORED BY ANTOINETTE HOTEL



ACT OF COURAGE AWARD
 SPONSORED BY HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS



PARENT/CARER AWARD
 SPONSORED BY WIMBLEDON GUARDIAN



TEACHER AWARD

Thumbs up from residents

Merton's latest Annual Residents' Survey tells us that you think we're doing a good job, that we provide value for money and are efficient and well run.

"Best ever" for Merton

The latest survey, carried out by independent interviewers, shows that more residents than ever think the council is efficient and well run and gives value for money. Figures also reveal residents consistently agreeing that Merton Council is doing a good job (79%). Merton is outperforming London in all of these areas.

Making Merton affordable

With council tax being frozen for the fifth year running, the number of people who say the level of council tax is one of their top three concerns has reduced to an all-time low. The council knows that many people struggle with the cost of living and keeping council tax down is one way it can help.



Great green spaces and libraries

Merton's residents also rate what's offered at the borough's parks, playgrounds and open spaces highly. The number of park users who rated Merton's greenspaces as good to excellent is at its highest in the history of the survey.

While some London boroughs have closed their libraries to make savings, Merton has kept all libraries open thanks to the help of volunteers. The good quality service provided by our libraries was reflected in the survey with all time high satisfaction levels of 82% from library users.

Merton values what residents say

Although satisfaction with the way the council deals with graffiti (63%) and litter (61%) remains consistently positive, concern about the minority of people who litter our streets is increasing. That's why the council is taking a zero-tolerance approach to people who litter, with environmental enforcement specialists giving fines to people who drop cigarette butts or food wrappers in our town centres.



The survey of young people shows they have similar concerns to adults. Eighty-nine percent of young people agreed that Merton is a good place to live and most young people feel they get the services they need from the council and that the council does enough to protect them.

The Annual Residents' Survey is a great way to find out directly from residents what they think of the council's performance and the services it provides. This is particularly important now that £32 million in savings need to be made over the next four years. These results will help guide the council in making decisions on where to invest our reduced resources, make savings and implement change. 🏠

[find out more](https://merton.gov.uk/residentsurvey)
merton.gov.uk/residentsurvey



Keeping Merton moving

We're finding new ways to cut traffic congestion and make our roads safer for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers.



© Tassili, iStockphoto.com

We know that traffic congestion is one of residents' top concerns. That's why we want to make it easier for residents to get round the borough more easily. This year we are installing automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology to monitor people driving in bus lanes, obstructing box junctions and blocking moving traffic. All potential contraventions recorded by the cameras will be checked and approved by a qualified officer. ANPR will be much more efficient than our current cameras and will free up council officers to spend more time dealing with issues on the roads, such as responding to complaints about pavement parking. This will help to reduce congestion and make the roads safer for both motorists and pedestrians and is a great example of the council using new technology to become more efficient.

The new system will mean it will be harder for drivers who don't follow the

rules to get away with it so initially we expect that there will be an increase in the number of motorists who get a penalty charge for breaking the rules. However,

When we do issue penalty charges using ANPR, the money we get is used to help fund Freedom Passes for our older residents and taxicards for people with visual or mobility impairments.

once these drivers change their behaviour the number of penalty charges will go down. Our aim is to keep the traffic moving by reducing congestion, not to

catch people out, so we're keen to help drivers stick to rules and avoid a penalty charge notice. You can visit our website for full details of where in the borough we use cameras and for a refresher course in the road signs you need to look out for. Money we get from penalty charges issued with ANPR is used to help fund Freedom Passes for our older residents and taxicards for people with visual or mobility impairments. A full breakdown of the money we receive from parking, and how we spend it, is available on our website at merton.gov.uk/parking_data

🔗 **find out more**

For our guide to cameras and traffic contraventions visit merton.gov.uk/parking_enforcement_policy

Pledge to love your street



Keep an eye out for the bright 'Love Your Street' stickers being posted around the borough following the launch of our anti-litter campaign, uniting the council, businesses, community groups and residents against people who litter.

Feedback from the 2014 Annual Residents' Survey showed that people dropping litter is a top concern for residents. Although satisfaction with street cleansing is high, the council is upping its fight against litter louts by raising awareness of the effect littering and fly-tipping has on the environment and Merton's budget. The council already tackles litter and fly-tipping through daily litter picks of town centres, enforcement, education sessions, its free bulky-waste collection service and its Street Champions scheme. Merton spends £5 million every year on keeping our borough clean and, with the council facing £32 million of cuts over the next four years, it is hoped that this campaign will help to reduce the amount of money the council has to spend picking up after a small minority of people.

Pledge your commitment and be in with a chance to win a £100 One4all voucher

To show support for keeping the borough clean, people can sign up to our Love Your Street pledge which sets out what residents can expect from the council and how residents, schools and businesses can help to stop people littering in the borough. The pledge is taken from the



kindly sponsored by



council's anti-litter code which was published last year. When people sign up they will receive a sticker to put in their window to demonstrate their support for those who work hard to keep the borough tidy, making a stand against the small minority of people who litter. They will also be automatically entered into a draw for a £100 One4all voucher, sponsored by eddisonwhite estate agents, every three months and will get a quarterly e-newsletter with updates about local

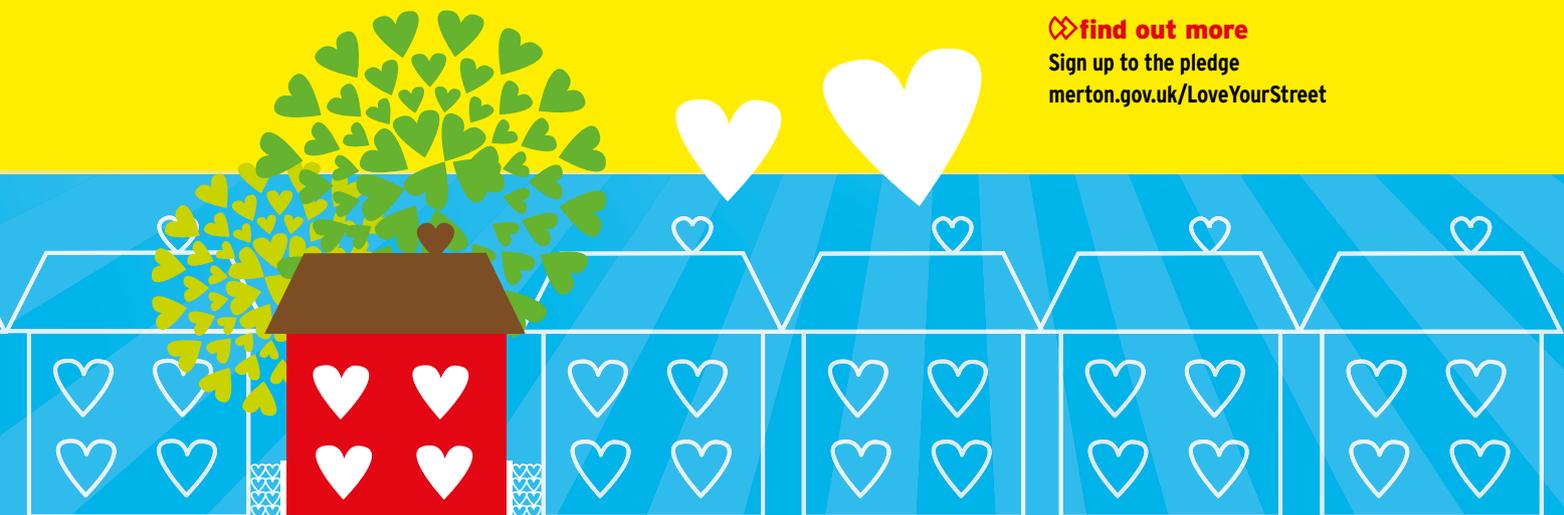
clean-ups, enforcement and education work we're doing and how you can get involved in helping to keep Merton clean.

Working with businesses and schools

We will be working with schools and businesses who sign up to the pledge (see page 24), providing interactive classes for the borough's school kids as well as advice to businesses about how they can do their bit to keep the borough clean. 🍷

🔗 find out more

Sign up to the pledge
merton.gov.uk/LoveYourStreet



A cleaner, greener borough

We know you care about your streets. Although satisfaction with the council's street cleaning is high, people littering is your number one concern in our Annual Residents' Survey. We spend £5 million every year sweeping the pavements, removing litter and dealing with fly-tipping. So we're always looking for new and efficient ways to tackle the issue. It's also a mission of ours to increase recycling in the borough. The more waste we recycle, the less we pay in landfill fees, generating savings we can use to fund services or to keep council tax down.



Mega recyclers

Our Mega Recycle campaign has helped create a buzz across Merton. By signing up to the scheme, residents promise to recycle their waste and, in return, are entered in a monthly draw with cash prizes.

Last year they also had the chance to nominate primary schools for prizes. Pelham School came first, winning £5,000 for their library. Dundonald came second and Wimbledon Chase third. Although the schools' scheme is now finished we'll continue to award prizes to residents in 2015, so sign up now!

Mayor of Merton Councillor Agatha Akyigyina,
Pelham Primary School Headteacher Maria Keenan
and pupils at Pelham Primary School



Love your street

We've launched a Love Your Street anti-litter campaign to boost the positive work we do with residents, businesses, community groups and schools. Find out more on page 11.



© Carmen by John Petrey

Style Junkies

Our Style Junkies competition invites budding designers to create innovative fashion items out of waste material or second-hand clothes. There are two categories open to Merton school pupils and students at Wimbledon College of Art. Winners will receive cash prizes for themselves and their schools. To take part you must register online by 20 April and all entries will be displayed on the Style Junkies website, where you can vote for your favourite. There'll also be catwalk shows and exhibitions later in the year.

Wheeled bin trial

This April 1,050 homes in Lavender Fields, Mitcham, will receive two wheeled bins as part of a new, modest trial with £67,000 in government funding to see if the bins will help to keep streets clean. Many residents use black bags for their refuse at the moment, which can be ripped open by foxes, creating litter. Recycling boxes have no lids and if materials get wet they are more difficult to recycle, often ending up in landfill, which costs the council more. After six months the council's scrutiny committee will review the trial and decide whether wheeled bins offer good value.



Action on litter and fly-tipping

Since last summer we've been issuing fines to people who drop litter. So far, over 5,000 fixed penalty notices have been handed out across Merton in the last year. Many of these are for dropping cigarette butts. To spread the word that cigarette butts are litter, for which you can get a £75 fine, and to encourage people to dispose of them responsibly, we'll be out and about in town centres handing out free stubby pouches.

With warmer weather on the way we will be stepping up our anti-litter campaign in parks too. We will be using specialist enforcement officers to issue £75 fines to people caught dropping litter or not picking up after their dogs.

We are also tackling fly-tipping using camera equipment, and with the help of residents who report problems and give us the information we need to take court action. Earlier in the year we brought three successful prosecutions against people for dumping rubbish in residential areas. In total the three fly-tippers were fined £2,850.

Garden waste

Merton Council offers an environmentally friendly garden waste collection service.

We pick up your green waste and compost it at an annual cost to users of just £65, with a reduced rate of £50 per year for concessions. Annual



subscriptions run from July to June each year. Fortnightly collections operate throughout the year (except for two collections over the Christmas/New Year period). To subscribe, call 020 8274 4902.

Find out more

For the Mega Recycle and Style Junkies visit merton.gov.uk/megarecycle

This month is a good time to give your area a spruce up so we'll be supporting residents who want to embark on a spring clean-up - visit merton.gov.uk/stretchampions to find out more.

Report it

Get in touch with us about environmental problems or with ideas and suggestions, visit merton.gov.uk/environment or call 020 8274 4902 or download the Love Clean Streets mobile phone app

COMPETITION



Win a family ticket to see the critically acclaimed Spamalot at New Wimbledon Theatre

Monty Python's Spamalot gallops back out on tour to bring the West End production to theatres across the land!

Spamalot tells the legendary tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and features a bevy (or possibly a brace) of beautiful show girls, witch burnings, not to mention cows, killer

rabbits and French people. The show features

fantastic tunes more magical than a Camelot convention, including *He Is Not Dead Yet*, *Knights of the Round Table*, *Find Your Grail* and of course the Nation's Favourite Comedy Song (Reader's Digest Poll 2010), *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*. **To book tickets visit www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon or call 0844 871 7646** (booking fees apply). For your chance to win a family ticket for four, simply answer the following question:

Spamalot tells the story of which King?

- A) George**
- B) Henry**
- C) Arthur**

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*, 8th floor, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX. The closing date for entries is Friday 3 April.

Terms and conditions: The tickets are non-transferable. There are no cash alternatives, accommodation or travel included in this prize. The competition is for one family ticket (four tickets) to see Spamalot at New Wimbledon Theatre, valid on any performance between Monday 8 June–Thursday 11 June.

MERTON COUNCIL

Drive4life

If you find today's busy roads a challenge, our free session can return you to confident driving. Designed for drivers over 65 years old

For more information visit:
merton.gov.uk/drive4life

Pre-learner driving skills course

For 17-24 year olds with a provisional car driving license. Free 3 hour theory session followed by 3 free driving lessons.

Application form available on:
merton.gov.uk/roadsafety

Children's cycle training

Merton provides free 'on road' cycle training for children age 10+ at Merton schools during school term, and Easter and summer holidays.

Further details and application form available on:
merton.gov.uk/roadsafety

Basic cycle maintenance training for adults

A half day session held once a month at local venues.

For more information please contact:
road.safety@merton.gov.uk

Please type cycle maintenance in the subject heading.

Motor bike and moped courses

Be a brighter biker, for learner riders Free classroom session and CBT

Bike Safe, for experienced riders. A free training day for experienced riders provided by the police.

Further details and application form available on:
merton.gov.uk/roadsafety

Adult cycle training

Free adult cycle training for beginners, refreshers and commuters from March to November on Saturday mornings in Morden. We can even provide a bicycle for you to use if you haven't got your own.

Further details and application form available on:
merton.gov.uk/roadsafety

All events and training are funded in conjunction with Transport for London and are available to those who live, work or study in the London Borough of Merton.

Alternatively, please contact us for more information:

Contact: Future Merton, London Borough of Merton, 12th Floor, Civic Centre, London Road, Morden SM4 5DX
Telephone: 020 8545 3205 / 06
Email: road.safety@merton.gov.uk
Web: merton.gov.uk/roadsafety

merton.gov.uk/roadsafety



Angela helping Merrill, one of the people she supports, go to her dental appointment

Working life

Angela Kleanthous works at the council supporting the needs of adults in Merton who have learning disabilities. *My Merton* caught up with Angela to find out about the good work the team does.

Merton spends more than £13 million every year on supporting the needs of learning disabled residents.

Angela and her team help adults with learning disabilities manage their health and care needs and support them to become more independent.

“Our main focus is to help the residents we look after to live as independently as possible in the local community,” Angela explains. “We work closely with them to identify the care and support they need and their aspirations about what they want to achieve and we put them in touch with services that can help them achieve a good quality of life.”

Helping people over the age of 18 years old who are living at home with family or

in supported living, or even living independently, the team makes sure that they tailor their service to suit each individual’s needs. Angela and her colleagues set up a pilot scheme called Self Directed Support in 2012 as a way to give their clients more control and choice over the support they receive. Angela says: “This has really helped us to provide residents with what they want and empowers them to decide what support is best for them. Often they will want to go to college, volunteer, get a job or improve their social life.”

The team is multi-disciplinary with nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and others working together, making the service the team provides more efficient and people-focused,

especially as resources have reduced due to the savings the council needs to make.

Angela says: “Although services like this that support our most vulnerable residents are taking a lower share of the cuts than other council services, the financial challenge encourages us to be more innovative about the way we deliver our services. We look at how to make the most of opportunities in the community and work with other boroughs to meet the needs of the residents we care for.”

Working with her clients to achieve their personal goals is what Angela thinks is most special about her work. “It’s very rewarding to see a client build confidence, get a job, make friends and achieve key milestones in their life through the vital support our services provide.”

A business-like and fair budget

Every year the council has to balance its budget so that it can continue to deliver the services residents need. By being business-like, Merton has dealt with reduced funding by becoming more efficient than ever while keeping council tax low and making tough financial decisions in a fair way.



Protecting our essential services

The government has reduced funding to local authorities by 40%. Over the next four years, the council faces having to make savings of £32 million a year. We're looking at how we can review the way we deliver services as well as having to make some difficult choices.

However more residents than ever say we're efficient, well run and offer value for money so we're confident we can make these changes in a fair and affordable way.

As a business-like council we are planning ahead for the savings we will need to make over the next four years. We have set out our core priorities for how we protect essential services and our most vulnerable residents:

- Continuing to provide the statutory services you need
- Ensuring services for the most vulnerable residents take a lower share of the cuts
- Keeping council tax low
- Keeping Merton's streets clean
- Ensuring Merton continues to be a good place for young people to go to school and grow up
- Doing the best we can for the local environment

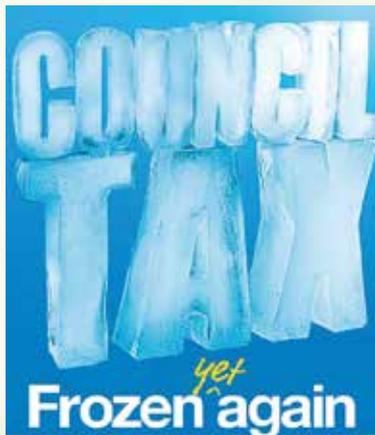
With the size of the cuts the council is facing, everything else needs to be up for discussion.

Due to the level of savings required every area of council services will be impacted but, as in previous

years, the cabinet has agreed children's services and adult social care should find proportionately smaller savings than other services. It won't be easy and we'll have to change the way we work but we're committed to keeping all our libraries, day care and children's centres open.

The largest portion of the council's spending goes on adult social care. So although we have agreed that these services should take a lower share of the cuts, we can't completely protect them. However we think it's right that we use our reduced funding to focus on the people who need these services most.





Keeping your council tax bill down

We're committed to keeping your council tax bill down and are freezing it for the fifth year running.

Although we need to make £32 million savings by 2018/19, raising council tax is not the answer. We know times are tough, and many residents can't afford to pay more. That's why keeping council tax down is such a priority for us. In any case, to raise £32 million, bills would have to rise by a whopping 40%.

We've looked at more sensible ways of bridging this gap in a way that provides value for money for our residents.

Being efficient and sensible

We've already made substantial cuts to our 'back-office' functions to make sure that we can

protect other essential services. We will also be saving £15,000 a year by stopping the webcasting of council meetings.

We've introduced more services online, like getting a parking permit and using a mobile phone app to report fly-tipping and litter. This will make it easier for you to access council services and reduce our costs too.

These sensible savings help us to protect our most vulnerable residents, invest in our school expansions, keep all our libraries open as well as continuing our weekly waste collection and street-cleaning services.

We're looking at all our services to see if they can be delivered in a more financially sustainable way through working with our partners and sharing services and expertise with neighbouring boroughs.

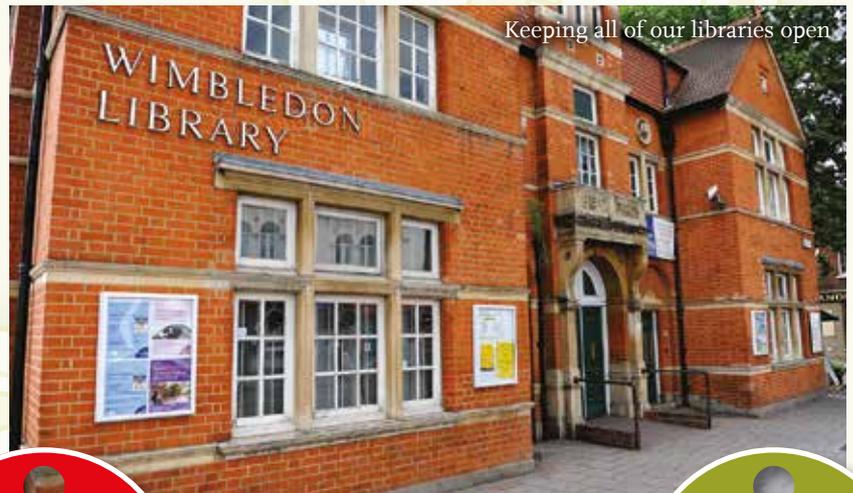
We're proposing to work with our neighbours Sutton, Croydon and Kingston, through the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP), to change the way we deliver our waste collection and greenspaces maintenance services.

We've worked this way before to make substantial savings and by working together again, we hope to generate savings of up to £1 million a year. This won't affect the service you receive and your waste will still be collected every week. The four councils will work together to get the best possible deal for a specialised contractor to take care of our parks as well as a contractor to carry out our waste collections and we would still be managing both services.

We're also looking at the most effective and business-like way to deliver a financially sustainable adult learning service. We've set out key principles to ensure that adult learning stays in the borough and that the breadth and variety of courses on offer remains the same.

Although the next few years will bring more financial challenges and the necessity for further savings, Merton will continue to be a business-like borough that ensures efficient, value for money services for council taxpayers.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/budget



Cost-effective services



Making Merton a great place to grow up



Merton 50

This spring your borough celebrates its Golden Jubilee. Merton, and the 31 other London boroughs were created 1 April 1965 in a massive reshaping of London that has had a major impact on the development of neighbourhoods, housing, education and other services.



Pictured clockwise from top left: Merton and Morden Urban District Council – Final Meeting March 1965; Mitcham Police in 1965; Wimbledon Library – informing the public 1965; William Roope, the Borough Treasurer 1965–1975

Looking back at Britain 50 years ago, MPs had voted to abolish capital punishment and Winston Churchill's state funeral had taken place at St Paul's Cathedral. It was announced that we'd be going metric and drink driving limits were about to be introduced. Coronation Street was our top TV show, miniskirts were in vogue and Britain's tallest building, the Post Office Tower was set to open.

Locally, schoolboys led a petition against the Vietnam War, a flying saucer had been spotted over the borough and there were plans to demolish the historic Ely's store to make way for a modern building.

Planning to set up the new Merton Council had been going on since the 1963 Local Government Act established the London boroughs. It was announced in 1964 that the borough would be known as Merton,

which didn't go down well in Wimbledon. In February 1965 a new coat of arms was agreed and Alderman March was appointed the borough's first mayor.

The new council had to get to grips with a housing crisis – the borough was short of homes by 8,000 and more than 5,000 families had to share a toilet with a neighbour. Aside from housing, 13 major building projects were announced that year in plans to improve health, including clinics, nurseries and training centres for disabled people. 🏠

🔗 **find out more**
merton.gov.uk/Merton50



Get involved

There are plenty of ways to celebrate, whether you want to explore your area's past, wander down memory lane or just have fun. Here are a few highlights...

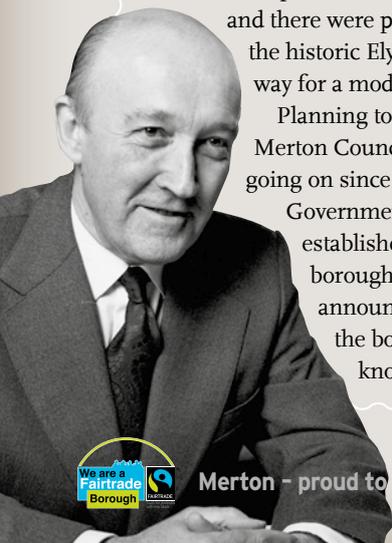
Discovery Day This annual celebration of Merton's heritage is themed around the 50th anniversary and will take place on 28 March at Morden Library.

Celebration event Wednesday 15 April, 5.30–7pm. All are welcome to attend this celebration event at the Civic Centre in Morden. Let us know if you intend to come by emailing leisure@merton.gov.uk

50 Golden Events We are calling on local organisations, groups, communities and residents to join in the celebrations by planning a Golden Event on any date from 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015.

Golden Jubilee logo Schools have been involved in a competition to design a special logo, based on the Merton crest, and the winner will be announced at our celebration event on Wednesday 15 April.

Music for Life - Backstories Merton Music Foundation event at the Royal Albert Hall. Find out more at www.mmf.org.uk



£4 million grant to restore the Canons

One of Mitcham's hidden gems is destined for a £4 million makeover thanks to a successful council-led bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The restoration of the Canons and its grounds will create a new community hub, with attractions for the whole family, and make it a focal point for local regeneration plans.

The Canons is part of a conservation area featuring listed buildings, green space, elegant gardens, a 500-year-old dovecote and an historic pond. It includes Canons House and Madeira Hall, which will be restored to host sporting and community events. A wildlife pond, sensory garden, natural play park and café will all be created in the grounds along with photography projects, trails and a host of community events and activities.



The land is recorded as part of church estates as far back as the middle ages. Canons House was built in 1681 and owned by the Cranmer family and their descendants until it was sold to the council in 1939. Although the grounds are just minutes from the town centre, their historic significance can easily be overlooked.

The HLF has earmarked £4 million for the project with an initial £300,000 to enable the council and community, who

are already working closely together as the Canons partners*, to develop a detailed bid. A series of public events will be held this year for people to learn more and get involved before the bid is submitted in 2016 and the full grant becomes available.

The project aims to be highly sustainable with plans to grow food on the site and create compost and rainwater harvesting facilities. With the popular Canons leisure centre nearby, there's a sporting element too.

The restored Canons will complement



the Rediscover Mitcham regeneration plans by enhancing a beautiful open space close to the town and an attractive link between the shops and Cricket Green.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/canons

*The Canons partners consists of Friends of the Canons, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage and Mitcham Society who are all working closely with Merton Council



New stuff you can **recycle**...

aerosols,  aluminium foil, 

shampoo bottles,  detergent

bottles,  bleach bottles, 

butter tubs,  yoghurt pots, 

fruit and vegetable punnets, 



meat trays, ready meal

food trays and ice cream tubs.

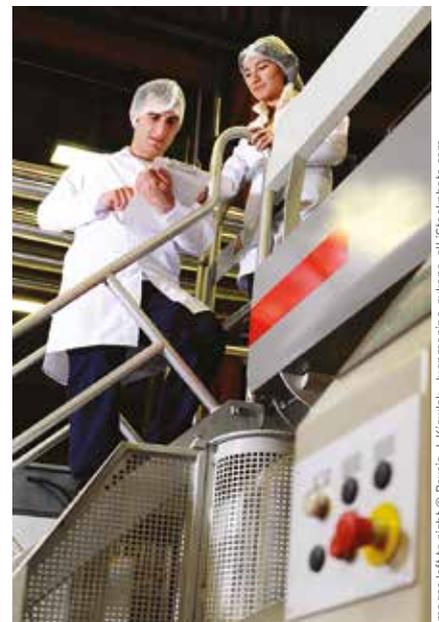


For a full list of materials please visit:
merton.gov.uk/recycling



Setting the standard - a new way of working

They're the consumer heroes who'll step in to protect you from rogue traders, dodgy deals, noisy neighbours and much more. Now, to offer better value for money, Merton and Richmond Councils' regulatory teams have got together to pool staff and resources in a new shared service, led and hosted by Merton.



Images left to right © Brycia J. Kiewiak, Juanmonino, sykkono, all iStockphoto.com

With the council facing £32 million of cuts, this move is a good example of how we are able to generate savings. However it is about much more than that and offers a unique opportunity to pool knowledge and expertise and provide a better and more resilient service. Savings have been made by both boroughs sharing management and administration while retaining the same number of frontline officers.

The shared service will mean a bigger pool of experts to work across both boroughs. Residents of Merton will, for example, have access to Richmond's specialists in noise pollution. Merton officers' experience of enforcing at large-scale sporting events, like Wimbledon tennis, will be invaluable when matches in this year's Rugby World Cup are played at Twickenham.

If you're not sure what the regulatory service does, it includes the environmental

health officers who inspect cafes and restaurants to check all is well with food hygiene. They are also your first port of call if you've been made ill by eating in local premises, or if you suspect food on sale is unfit for consumption.

A lot of the Trading Standards team's time is spent cracking down on doorstep crime. For instance, they target the roofers and driveway firms that prey on vulnerable people, whose botched jobs land people with hefty bills.

A lot of the Trading Standards team's time is spent cracking down on doorstep crime. For instance, they target the roofers and driveway firms that prey on vulnerable people, whose botched jobs land people with hefty bills.

There's licensing too, which regulates pubs, clubs and bars – a tough job with many premises wanting to open for

longer, causing a potential nuisance to their neighbours. And there's the borough's noise team, which helps residents plagued by loud neighbours, investigating thousands of complaints a year.

It is intended that additional boroughs will join the shared service in future, leading to even greater efficiencies and further sharing of skills and knowledge across borders. 🚩

🔗 find out more

For links to our regulatory services visit merton.gov.uk/environmentalhealth

DRIVE 4 LIFE

If you find today's busy roads a challenge, our **FREE** session* can return you to confident driving. Designed for drivers over 55 years of age.

*A half day course with presentations on road hazards and driving problems including a practical assessment with a driving instructor to advise on your driving skills.

To find out more, and book online visit the website, or call 020 8545 3206

merton.gov.uk/drive4life



Merton in Bloom

Application for entry 2015

Surname: _____

First Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Daytime Telephone No: _____

Email: _____

Please tick the categories you wish to enter:

- 1 2 3 4 5
- 6 7 8 9 10

All entries must be visible to the passing public. (excluding 4 and 5)

Details of Exhibit(s) and address, if different to above:

Please send applications and entries for category 5 to:

Greenspaces Events Team
13th Floor
Merton Civic Centre
London Road,
Morden SM4 5DX

Closing date for applications 19 June 2015

Merton in Bloom Competition 2015

- | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|----|------------------------------|
| Categories | 1 | Best front garden over 20 sqm | 6 | Best bloomin' pub |
| | 2 | Best front garden under 20 sqm | 7 | Best floral allotment garden |
| | 3 | Best balcony | 8 | Best hanging basket |
| | 4 | Best school wildlife garden | 9 | Best commercial premises |
| | 5 | Best child's A4 drawing of a flower bed themed to celebrate Merton's 50 years as a London Borough.* | 10 | Best community garden |

* (entries will be judged in age categories 3-6, 7-10 and 11-14)

You can also enter online at:
merton.gov.uk/mertoninbloom



A new vision for
Colliers Wood

The changes will make the town centre more attractive, adding much-needed street trees and seating

Artist's impression

Connecting Colliers Wood

Pop by Colliers Wood this summer and you'll really notice a difference in the area, when work to link the town centre with its green and historic spaces will be complete.

The transformation of Colliers Wood is now well underway. As part of this the council has been working with Criterion, the company which owns the Colliers Wood tower that dominates the area. After standing empty for a decade, the council have pushed the owner to ensure the tower is redeveloped into 150 apartments with shops on the ground floor and a new public plaza below. The past year has seen lengthy negotiations but Criterion's contractors are now busy on site. The building work is expected to take 18 months.

This is just part of a much wider multi-million pound redevelopment of the area. The changes will make the town centre more attractive, adding much-needed street trees and seating. They will also make connections with Colliers Wood's industrial heritage; namely historic sites like William Morris' print works and Arthur Liberty's dyeing and fabric plants, which were based at Merton Abbey Mills.

The £3 million transformation is a joint project between Merton Council and Transport for London (TfL) with help from the Mayor of London's regeneration fund. It launched 18 months ago and has involved two rounds of public consultation.

The money will fund better paving and street lighting, and feature fencing around the River Wandle. Baltic Close will become a pedestrian space and there'll be improved landscaping outside Sainsbury's. A new entrance to Wandle Park will encourage visitors to stroll from the station and urban space to this tranquil setting.

Around the area you'll see plenty of echoes of its past. William Morris's printing blocks are being reproduced as chunky wooden

benches in Baltic Close and there'll be lamp columns made from the charred timber that gives Colliers Wood its name.

Transport works will be carried out too, to reduce congestion and make cycling easier and safer. Improvements include better road junctions at Colliers Wood High Street, Christchurch Road and the Priory Road. 🚦

🔗 **find out more**

For more go to merton.gov.uk/connectingcollierswood or visit the Colliers Wood Tower Action Group's Facebook page.

William Morris's printing blocks are being reproduced as chunky wooden benches in Baltic Close



Love your street

Pledge to love your street...



Thanks to the
Love Your Street
campaign sponsor
eddisonwhite

Businesses, schools and
organisations that have
pledged to love their street

Businesses

ABC Grocery and Butchers, Morden
Cafe D'Oro, Morden
Easy Tan, Morden
eddisonwhite, Colliers Wood
eddisonwhite, Wimbledon
Ganley's Irish Bar, Morden
Jose's Café, Morden
Kebaby, Morden
KFC, Morden
Morden Dry Cleaners
Paddy Power, Morden
P J Harvey & Co Ltd Locksmiths, Morden
Robert Dyas, Wimbledon
The Generator Business Centre, Mitcham
The Old Frizzle, Wimbledon
Timmy All In One, Morden
Village Café, Morden

Schools

Beecholme Primary School
Dundonald Primary School
Haslemere Primary School
Hatfeild Primary School
Hillcross Primary School
Holy Trinity CE Primary School
Malmesbury Primary School
Poplar Primary School
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
The Priory C of E Primary School
Wimbledon Chase Primary School

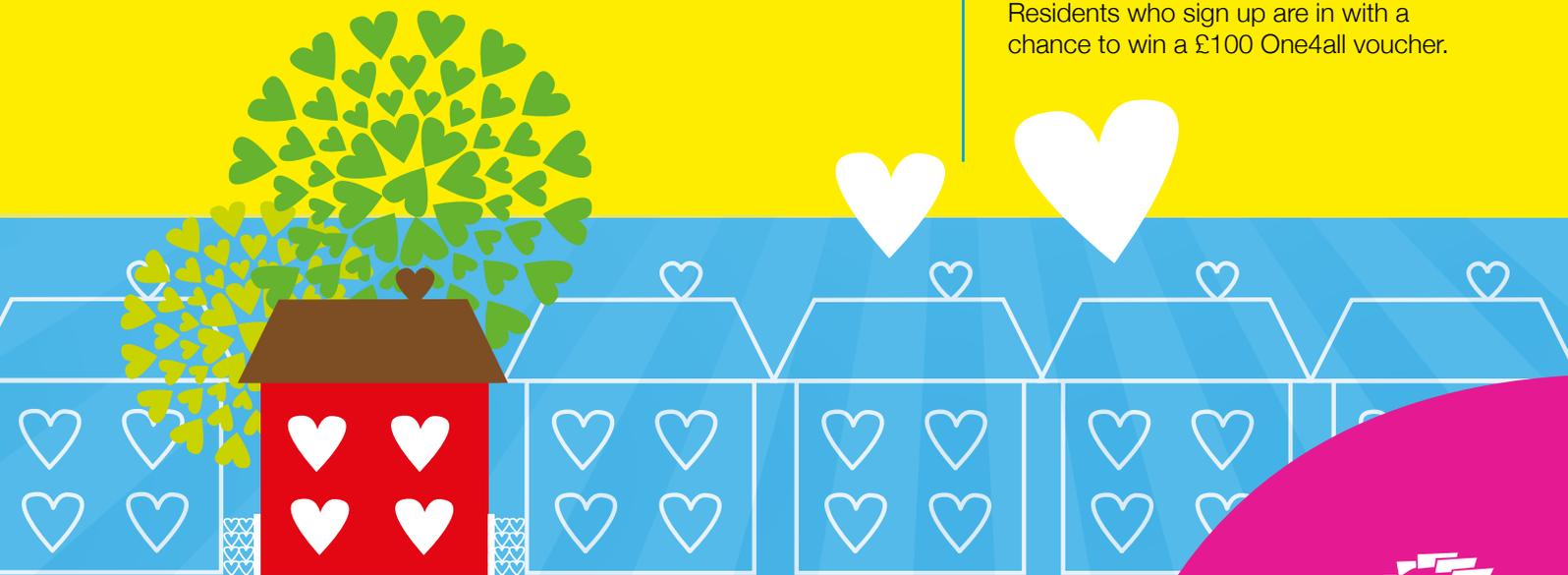
Organisations

Merton Chamber of Commerce
Sustainable Merton

Thanks to all the residents who have
signed up so far. Show your support by
signing the pledge at:

merton.gov.uk/LoveYourStreet

Residents who sign up are in with a
chance to win a £100 One4all voucher.



merton.gov.uk/loveyourstreet



COLLIERS WOOD

MITCHAM

MORDEN

RAYNES PARK

WIMBLEDON/MERTON

Arts and entertainment

● Morden Park Choral Society

Saturday 21 March, 7.30pm

St John the Divine, High Path, SW19 2JY. Morden Park Choral Society presents *Splendour of the Baroque* with music by Monte Verde, Vivaldi and Händel. Cost £10, concessions £5.

🔗 [find out more](#)

020 8648 6445

● Scottish Country Dancing

Every Tuesday evening, 8-10.30pm

Holy Trinity Church Hall, 234 The Broadway, Wimbledon. Scottish Country Dancing with the St Andrew's Society in central Wimbledon every Tuesday evening. Several bus routes pass the hall. Cost includes interval refreshments. We are a very friendly group and welcome new members. Age range from late teens to seniors. Cost £4.50.

🔗 [find out more](#)

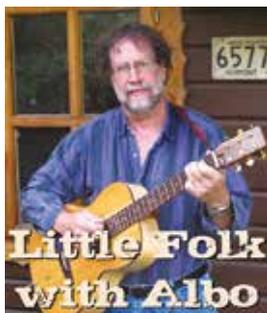
020 8540 1755

www.standrewsoclondon.net

● Little Folk with Albo Concerts

Saturday 21 March, 10.30-11.15am

Colour House Theatre, Merton Abbey Mills, Watermill Way. Popular American folksinger/guitarist Al Clogston (aka Albo) will be continuing his second series of



Saturday morning concerts for kids at the Colour House Theatre.

Albo will present a mixture of folk songs, American camp songs, traditional children's songs, sing-alongs and original songs for kids.

Cost £5.

🔗 [find out more](#)

020 8542 5511

www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk/rebrand/booking/little-folk-with-albo

● Wimbledon Choral Society

Monday 30 March, 7.30pm

Wimbledon Choral Society celebrates its centenary season with a performance of one of the great choral classics, coupled with a blockbuster of a symphony, taking advantage of Royal Festival Hall's recently rebuilt organ and working with an orchestra of some of the most talented young graduates and students of the London conservatoires. Cost £10-£40.

🔗 [find out more](#)

0844 847 9910

www.southbankcentre.co.uk

● Texas 2 London

Friday 10 April, 7-9pm

Colour House Theatre, Watermill Way, London, SW19 2RD. Cost £3 (on the door). The Austin International Poetry Festival is renowned as one of the world's poetic melting pots, bringing together a diverse and exciting mix of voices. *Texas 2 London* takes you into the thick of the action with a live video link from



Merton's Colour House Theatre. At 7pm there will be an offline open mic, with three participants selected to take part in the video-linked section of the evening starting at 8pm, when our guest poets (including Matt Black and Agnes Meadows) will be trading poems with some of Austin's finest. Hosted by Robin Vaughan-Williams and Project Adorno.

🔗 [find out more](#)

020 3730 8039

www.zeroquality.net

Celebrate Merton at 50. See page 18 or find out more at merton.gov.uk/Merton50

POLKA THEATRE

Polka Theatre

240, The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1SB

Box office: 020 8543 4888

www.polkatheatre.com

● Operation Magic Carpet

Friday 3 April-Sunday 24 May



An action-packed adventure from London to Baghdad. Nomi lives in London but dreams about Baghdad, where her parents are from. One night over dinner, a genie bursts out of a mango pickle jar and Nomi is swept away on a magic carpet to Baghdad.

Characters from the Arabian Nights come to life as she meets Sinbad, swims the Tigris and sees a water buffalo. A magical play about exploring your culture and knowing where you come from so you know where you're going. Cost £14.50, concessions £10 (subject to £1.50 booking fee).

● The Cosmic Dancer

Wednesday 27-Sunday 31 May

For half term we are delighted to welcome theatre company La Baracca from Italy. Pepita wants to be a dancer. More than that, she wants to become a cosmic dancer, to swing from a star and be lifted by the clouds. But that's not as easy as she thought, the stars are far away and the clouds slip through her fingers. Cost £13.50, concessions £10 (subject to £1.50 booking fee).



staying in?

Here's a selection of what's new in Merton's libraries:

MY MERTON'S BOOK CHOICE

Summer at the Little Beach Street Bakery



Summer has arrived in the Cornish town of Mount Polbearne and Polly Waterford couldn't be happier. She is in love: in love with the beautiful seaside town she calls home, with running the bakery on Beach Street, and with her boyfriend, Huckle. And yet there's something unsettling about the gentle summer breeze floating through town. Selina, recently widowed, hopes moving to Mount Polbearne will ease her grief, but Polly has a secret that could destroy her friend's recovery, and responsibilities that Huckle thought he'd left behind are back. Is Polly about to lose everything she loves?

Other books:

- *Wartime Girls* - Anne Baker
- *Kidnap in Crete* - Rick Stroud
- *The Lincoln Myth* - Steve Berry

NEW DVDS: MY MERTON RECOMMENDS

What we did on our holiday



Rosamund Pike, David Tennant and Billy Connolly star in this family comedy written and directed by Andy Hamilton and Guy Jenkin (Creators of *Outnumbered*). As Doug (Tennant), his wife Abi (Pike) and their three children prepare to travel up to the Scottish Highlands for Doug's father Gordie's (Connolly) birthday, they fail to give their children a list of things that are to be kept secret. While their offspring set about telling Grandpa and Grandma (Annette Crosbie) the ins and outs of their lives down in London, including intimate details of arguments their parents have had, Doug and Abi try to put aside their differences and have an enjoyable weekend.

Other DVDs:

- *The Grand Seduction*
- *The Riot Club*
- *Life of Crime*

The Colour House Children's Theatre

Merton Abbey Mills, Watermill Way, SW19 2RD

● The Jungle Book

Saturdays and Sundays until 12 April, 2pm and 4pm

The wonderful and enchanting tale of *The Jungle Book* is brought to life in The Colour House Children's Theatre.

Join Mowgli on his amazing adventure as he meets all the friendly, dangerous and unusual characters that this show is so well known for. Will Shere Khan or Kaa get him? Will King Louie deceive the young boy in telling him how to make fire? Will Baloo and Bagheera be the heroes? Will Mowgli survive all the challenges that the jungle will present to him? This show is a must for all the family and is guaranteed to be full of all the fun and excitement that we have become so well known for! Cost adult £10, child £8.



● New theatre school

Wednesday 26 February - Saturday 28 March
(5 weeks £50)

Wednesdays 4.30-6.30pm (12-16 years). Saturdays 9-10.20am (5-7 years). Saturdays 10.30-11.50am (8-11 years). Cost £12 per drop-in class.

find out more

020 8542 5511; www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk

● Summer Open Studios Art Show

Thursday 14 May - Sunday 17 May,
Thursday 2-10pm,
Friday 2-9pm and
Saturday and
Sunday 11am-6.30pm

Wimbledon Art Studios, 10 Riverside Yard, Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BB. Wimbledon Art Studios is one of Europe's largest single site studio complexes, housing over 220 of London's artists, designers and crafts people. Twice yearly we open our doors to the public for a four day event showcasing works from our resident artists, displaying work from all disciplines including painting, sculpture and ceramics. Attracting over

400 visitors on average per show, The Open Studios has become an important part of the arts calendar. Free admission.
find out more
020 8947 1183; enquiries@
wimbledonartstudios.co.uk

● Songs for a Summer Evening

Saturday 27 June, 7.30pm
Grand Drive, Raynes Park,

SW20 9DG. West Barnes Singers are presenting their summer concert displaying a varied and lively mix of music, including spiritual and gospel. Come and enjoy the balmy summer sounds. Cost £10, children free.

find out more
020 8648 3987
www.westbarnessingers.co.uk



Carnival is coming

This year's Mitcham Carnival will take place on Saturday 13 June at Three Kings Piece. The theme is 'back to the swinging sixties' to celebrate Merton's 50th anniversary as a London borough. To book a stall or for more details, visit merton.gov.uk/mitchamcarnival

Health and fitness

● Medau Movement class Monday evenings 7.30-9pm

Merton Park Baptist Church Hall, Bushey Road, London, SW20 8TE. Classes run on a term basis. Haven't exercised for a while? Keen to try something different? Each session of Medau Movement includes low impact, basic fitness elements.

Learn something new each week with great music in a fun and friendly environment. Improving co-ordination, balance, mobility, suppleness, energy, strength and stamina. Give your whole body a boost, stretch and wake up! Cost £7 per class (first class free). **find out more** 07778 010989 power.family4@ntlworld.com



Take up a new sport for free

Sports Blast is an exciting project being run by Merton Council to help young people aged 14-25 years find new ways of being active.

Funded by Sport England, the National Lottery and Circle Housing Merton Priory, the project offers free sports activities including tennis, netball, circuit training, zumba, football and BMX. Activities take place around Mitcham.

find out more merton.gov.uk/sportsblast
Like our Facebook page facebook.com/sportsblastmerton



© istgallery, Dreamstime.com

New Wimbledon Theatre

93 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1QG
Book online www.atgtickets.com/venues/new-wimbledon/theatre
Telephone booking 0844 871 7646
Group bookings 0844 871 7696 **Access bookings** 0844 871 7677

● Return to the Forbidden Planet Monday 23-Saturday 28 March. Monday-Saturday evenings, 7.30pm. Thursday

and Saturday matinees, 2.30pm
The adored and critically acclaimed Olivier Award winning rock spectacular is returning on a much anticipated 25th anniversary UK tour. Inspired by Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and packed with rock 'n' roll classics such as *Heard It Through the Grapevine*, *Young Girl*, *Great Balls Of Fire* and *Gloria* with stunning special effects and a brilliant cast of actor musicians this is a great night out to remember! Cost £29.50.



● Spamalot Monday 8-Saturday 13 June. Monday-Saturday, 7.30pm. Wednesday and Saturday, 2.30pm

Lovingly ripped off from the classic film comedy Monty Python and the Holy Grail, *Spamalot* is a kind-of new musical with a book by Eric Idle and an entirely new score for the new production, created by Eric Idle and John Du Prez. The latest tour, which is directed by Christopher Luscombe, follows hot on the heels of the can't-believe-how-successful-it-was-with-the-first-show-selling-out-in-40-seconds
Monty Python Reunion at The O2 and Eric Idle's acclaimed performance of *Always Look On The Bright Side of Life* at the 2012 Olympic Closing Ceremony – the world sang along, and *Spamalot* audiences get the opportunity to do so too! Cost £38.



● Merton Active Plus

Entertain your children this Easter with our fantastic range of courses for 8-16 year olds. Find something for everyone with arts, sports, and leisure and watersports courses running at venues

all over the borough. With a range of prices to suit every budget, your children can have an Easter holiday to remember! **find out more** 020 8545 4069; **Book online** at merton.gov.uk/activeplus



Interested in learning to bowl?

Visit merton.gov.uk/bowling_greens to find out more about all our bowling greens and clubs including Morden Bowling Club, Raynes Park Bowling Club, Merton Bowling Club, Mitcham Bowling Club, Greenwood Bowling Club and Wimbledon Bowling Club.

● Wimbledon Park Bowls Club

Starting Saturday 2 May. Taster sessions each Saturday, 11am-12.30pm
Wimbledon Park, SW19 7HX.
🔗 **find out more**
020 8265 5475; barrywillingham@ntworld.com;
www.wimbledonparkbowls.co.uk

● Merton Park Bowls Club

Every Wednesday starting from May until August, 6pm
John Innes Park, Mostyn Road.
Merton Park.
🔗 **find out more**
020 8542 2174

● Ridgway stables

Tuesday 31 March-
Friday 3 April, Tuesday
7-Friday 10 April



93 Ridgway, London SW19 4SU. Ridgway stables is running a four-day Easter Holiday Horse Riding and Care

Courses for children from ages 8-16 years. Cost £130 per course. Adults, make spring the time you learn to ride with intensive midweek day courses including lunch. Cost normally £174 but £20 off for My Merton readers (£154).

🔗 **find out more**
07831 241778
booking.merton.gov.uk/horse-riding-beginners-8-16

● Cardio Tennis at Cranleigh

Mondays 6.30-7.30pm,
Thursdays 10-11am,
Saturdays 8.45-9.45am
Cranleigh Lawn Tennis and Social Club. Cardio

Tennis is a high energy fitness class that combines the best features of the sport tennis with cardiovascular exercise, delivering the ultimate, full body, calorie burning aerobic workout. It is a very social and fun class for players of all ability levels. If you've never played tennis before, this is a great way to be introduced to the sport and if you are an experienced, high level tennis player it is the best way to train for tennis.

🔗 **find out more**
07740 194200
grant@limitlesstennis.co.uk

Walks and talks

● Wimbledon National Trust Association Talks

Christchurch Hall,
Cottenham Park Road,
West Wimbledon.
'London's Royal Palaces, Past and Present' by
John Garrod, Saturday 21 March, 2.15-4pm

In his illustrated talk, John will take us through some of those famous edifices that were once a power in the land, but alas are no more, and also speak about the ones that are part of our lives today. Cost £3 WNTA members, non-members £3.50.
'NGS Gardens' by
Margaret Arnott, Saturday 18 April, 2.15-4pm
Since its foundation, the National Gardens

Scheme has donated over £42.5 million to nominated beneficiaries, of which nearly £23 million has been donated within the last ten years. Margaret will talk about the origins of the NGS and what it is like to open a garden to the public. Cost £3 WNTA members, non-members £3.50.
🔗 **find out more**
07981 902771

● St Saviours' Church events

Table top sale, Saturday 18 April, 10am-12.30pm
St Saviours' Church, Grand Drive, Raynes Park, SW20 9DG. Tables £6, admission adults 30p, £1 before 10am.

Melanie's walks

● Wandle Walk

Saturday 9 May, 2pm at Mitcham Junction
Walk along the Beddington Farmlands path to Beddington Park and Carshalton. Return to Mitcham via the Wandle Trail with a visit to Wilderness Island.



● Wandle Walk

Sunday 7 June, 9.10am at Church Road tram stop
Walk along the Wandle Trail. Finish at Morden Hall Park. Part of an all-day event between Waddon Ponds and Wandsworth.

● Merton Health Walk

Every Thursday, 11am, Mitcham Junction Station
Join Cathy or Liz for a walk around Mitcham Common.
🔗 **find out more**
07944 833605; mInnuzet@gmail.com
www.merton.gov.uk/walk4life

Merton Outdoor Education Centre

Merton Outdoor Education Centre (MOEC) is new to Wimbledon Park and offers professional water-based and outdoor activity courses and training for teachers, youth leaders and anyone who'd like to learn how to teach outdoor education. Providing practical courses on the lake from powerboating, sailing and kayaking to cruising theory courses, there are also land-based courses available at MOEC including climbing, archery, team building, low ropes challenge and first aid.



🔗 **find out more**
booking.merton.gov.uk/merton-outdoor-education-centre-courses



St Saviours' May Fair,
Monday 4 May, 12-3pm
May Fair with maypole dancing, side shows, stalls, BBQ, a grand draw and a bouncy castle. Fun for all the family. Admission free.
🔗 **find out more**
michaelblackman1@sky.com
www.stsaviour.net

Family events

● **Mum2mum Market Baby and Children's Nearly New Sale Wimbledon**
Saturday 21 March, 2-4pm



Ricards Lodge High School, Lake Road, Wimbledon. Buy top quality second hand baby and children's clothes, toys, books and equipment at our award-winning pop up market. We are just a short walk from Wimbledon town centre and there is loads of free parking on site. Cost £2, children free.
🔗 **find out more**
020 8540 5498
info@mum2mummarket.co.uk
www.mum2mummarket.co.uk

Community forums

● **Wimbledon Community Forum**
Tuesday 17 March, 7.15pm Drake House, 44 St George's Road, Wimbledon, SW19 4ED.
● **Mitcham Community Forum**
Wednesday 18 March, 7.15pm Age UK Merton, 277 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3NT.
● **Morden Community Forum**
Tuesday 24 March, 7.15pm Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Morden SM4 5DX.
● **Raynes Park Community Forum**
Wednesday 25 March, 7.15pm Raynes Park Library Hall, Approach Road, Raynes Park, SW20 8BA.

Morden Hall Park events

Stable Yard, Morden Hall Park



● **Cadbury Easter Trail**
Friday 3-Monday 6 April, 11am-4pm
Follow a trail through the park in search of clues and collect your chocolate Easter egg prize at the end. Cost £4 per trail.

● **Launch of 50 things to do before you're 11¾**
Sunday 7 June, 11am-4pm
Join us for a day filled with outdoor activities, from den building and bug hunts to kite making, wild art and river dipping. Cost £4 per child.

● **Water Power Challenge**
Sun 22 March, 11am-3pm
Join us on World Water Day and see whether you can design the waterwheel that generates the most electricity. Free admission.
🔗 **find out more**
020 8545 6850
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park/things-to-see-and-do/events

● **Guided Walk: A Victorian Estate**
Thursday 19 March, 10.30am-1pm.
Tuesday 5 May and Saturday 6 June, 2-4.30pm
Stable Yard, Morden Hall Park.
Discover the past history of the estate on a gentle tour of the estate, followed by tea and cake or homemade soup (depending on the time booked).
Cost £9 per person, booking essential.
🔗 **find out more**
0844 249 1895
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park/things-to-see-and-do/events



● **Mitcham Horticultural Society's spring show**
Saturday 21 March, 2pm
St Mark's Church Hall, St Mark's Road, Mitcham.
Our spring show is normally a mass of colour with daffodils and hyacinths

and lots of pot plants, giving an array of colour and scent. Everybody is welcome. Free admission.
🔗 **find out more**
020 8640 3659
07774 643392
www.mitchamhorticulturalsociety.co.uk

● **Spring sheep shearing day**
Saturday 2 May, 11am-3pm
Deen City Farm, Merton

Abbey, SW19 2RR.
Come to our annual sheep shearing day with demonstrations throughout the day. There will be live music, a barbecue, bouncy castle, various stalls and games. Meet the animals during animal handling sessions. Feed the larger animals and have a pony ride. Free admission.
🔗 **find out more**
020 8545 2170

● Southside House Guided Tours

Easter Saturday until 2 October on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays at 2pm, 3pm and 4pm Southside House, 3-4 Woodhayes Road, SW19 4RJ. Described by connoisseurs as an unforgettable experience, Southside House provides an enchantingly eccentric backdrop to the lives and loves of generations of the Pennington Mellor Munthe families. Maintained in traditional style without intrusive refurbishment and



crowded with family possessions of centuries, Southside offers a wealth of fascinating family stories. Cost adult £9, concession £6, family ticket £15 (with children up to the age of 12, subject to a maximum of four people in a family group). [find out more](#) 020 8946 7643 www.southsidehouse.com info@southsidehouse.com

Kids First events

Merton's forum for parents of children and young people with disabilities or special needs

Chaucer Centre, Canterbury Road, Morden, SM4 6PX

● Family Footings

Tuesday 24 March, 10am-12pm

Family Footings is a project funded by the Department of Education to support parents to cope with the pressures they experience navigating the SEN system. Find out how Family Footings can help train parents to think and plan for their children by providing free training in Person Centred Approaches (PCA) which can help improve a child's outcomes. With Yvonne Linton, Family Footings Facilitator. Free admission.

● Wills and Trusts Workshop

Tuesday 24 March, 10am-12pm

What can you do to look after your child after you are no longer here? Free admission.

[find out more](#)

kids.first@swlondonmencap.nhs.uk; www.mertonmencap.org.uk/kidsfirst.htm



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT • YOUTH • SENIOR CITIZENS • FAMILY • HEALTH & FITNESS • WALKS & TALKS • FAIRS & EXHIBITIONS

YOUR CHILDREN ARE AMAZING. WE HELP THEM PROVE IT.

NumberWorks'nWords Maths and English tuition succeeds because children get:

- specialist Maths and English tutors
- direct instruction tailored to their individual needs
- help preparing for 7+, 11+, SATs, GCSE, verbal reasoning
- unique, proven resources designed to match their school curriculum
- caters for all levels 4-16 year olds

Maths & English
FREE ASSESSMENT –
BOOK TODAY!

Registered with Ofsted

Wimbledon 020 8543 7333
numberworksnnwords.co.uk

NumberWorks'nWords

Specialist Maths tuition and English tuition

2015 - Open your own business

Are you thinking seriously about starting your own business?

Did you know, the Merton Business Support Service offers a range of subsidised business services and training programmes to help you launch your new business?



become your own boss,
turn your idea into a success,
realise your potential!

Contact our business advisers to see how we can help.

020 8619 0700
mertonbusinesssupport.co.uk
helpdesk@mertonbusinesssupport.co.uk



Merton Business Support Service



The Merton Business Support Service is financially supported by The London Borough of Merton.

Can the 18yr old in your house be heard?

Remind them to...

register to vote

The way we all register to vote has changed. Under the old system the 'head of household' could register everyone who lives at their address.

Now everyone is responsible for registering themselves.

So, if someone in your household has just turned 18, make sure they get heard and register to vote.

They can go online and register, all they need is their national insurance number and date of birth

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

MAKE SURE YOU'RE IN



gov.uk/register-to-vote



5 minutes
with...

Khadiru Mahdi



Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC) has a new chief executive. We ask Khadiru Mahdi how he is finding his new role.

What do you think of the borough and its voluntary scene?

I live in Sutton, so Merton has been my neighbouring borough for 17 years. The people are welcoming and the voluntary and community sector is very active.

What challenges are local groups facing?

Austerity measures have had a significant impact on local communities, so the voluntary and community organisations serving them on the frontline are facing increasing demands, while experiencing a squeeze on their funding.

How do you plan to meet those challenges?

I will be an advocate for voluntary organisations; so the council better understands their needs. MVSC will support the council to work with the voluntary and community sector to co-design and deliver services for residents.

What sort of volunteering opportunities exist in the community?

The opportunities are varied - being a school governor, giving time to help a community group, supporting a carer or helping at a community event. It's your choice and you can put in as much time as you feel able to.

Why volunteer?

People can use it to share their skills and experience. Others gain skills and confidence and see it as a positive route to employment, particularly young people or those recovering from mental ill-health.

Volunteering is the bedrock of social action and I encourage residents to get in touch with MVSC's Volunteer Centre and talk to us about how you can start or engage in more volunteering.

find out more

www.mvsc.co.uk

info@mvsc.co.uk

020 8685 1771

news and information from your council

mymerton