New library for Colliers Wood opens

Merton secondary schools are top of the class

Meet Shared Lives officer Rochelle Simpson

Win a family ticket for Awful Auntie at New Wimbledon Theatre
You might have seen me a few weeks back waving my blue and yellow scarf with other fans to celebrate the council signing the planning contract to allow AFC Wimbledon back into the borough with a brand new stadium back at Plough Lane.

For those who didn’t know, I’m a trained referee, and helping AFC got me reminiscing about a “friendly” match I oversaw years ago, involving some of the Dons’ Crazy Gang of the 80s, players like Vinnie Jones and Dennis Wise.

Even though it was a friendly, I had to make some tough calls that day, I can tell you! And that memory got me thinking.

A referee has a difficult job, but if they make the tough calls, they make the game better.

And that’s just like running a council, it’s not easy, but if we are business-like and make tough decisions, we make our community a better place than it would have been.

As you’ve probably seen, the government has cut local authority funding by more than 40% since 2010.

Dealing with government cuts might not be as painful as Vinnie Jones kicking lumps out of you, but sometimes it’s felt like it!

We’ve had to make many tough calls, in a business-like way, but these have meant we can provide the services you value the most, to make Merton a great place for families to live.

They’ve meant we can put more into the budget for caring for our older people. They’ve meant a brand new library in Colliers Wood, on three levels with space for the community, and thousands more places at schools that are ranked among the country’s best.

They’ve meant our new Morden Leisure Centre will open later this year, with two pools and amazing gym facilities.

And they’ve meant AFC’s new stadium, back in Merton at last, has finally got the green light.

I don’t think I could referee the Crazy Gang any more, but now when I think of our parks and green spaces, our schools and our libraries, I will think of all the other referees all over the country, making things better!

The Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Stephen Alambris, writes for My Merton

Providing the best possible service for our residents

It’s great to see a photo of one of the borough’s several outstanding schools on the cover of this magazine. We’re so proud of our schools here in Merton, and will always take the chance to recognise the amazing work teachers and staff do.

The fact 91% our schools are OFSTED-rated ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’, and Merton’s state schools officially hold the top spot in the country for ‘Progress 8’ scores, explains why demand for secondary school places in the borough has reached record levels. We are making sure we can meet this demand by opening a new school at the centre of the borough, another great resource for Merton’s families.

As a council, we strive to provide the best possible services for our residents, at school, at work, and at home. Which is why I’m pleased to see the apology from Veolia on page 20, which acknowledges worrying litter levels in some parts of Merton. Joining neighbouring boroughs in the South London Waste Partnership, with all of us using Veolia, will reduce overheads and save millions of pounds that can be spent on things we can all enjoy, like libraries or parks or leisure facilities.

But we should still expect a reasonable level of service – especially as it is so vital to everyone’s everyday lives. With so much of the litter on our streets caused by black bags being ripped open, the introduction of wheelie bins later this year should improve matters.

Of course, it is not Veolia who drop the remaining litter. The people who do must take their share of responsibility – and if we catch them we will fine them. But it’s helpful to have this assurance from Veolia that they will be working flat out to give Merton residents the service we deserve.

Providing the best possible service for our residents

Finding out how Veolia recycle mattresses at Garth Road

The Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Stephen Alambris, writes for My Merton
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What’s on
Your guide to all that’s going on in Merton this spring

Don’t forget to visit our website!
merton.gov.uk/mymerton
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@Merton_Council

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YouTube
www.youtube.com/mertoncouncil

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 14 March 2018.

My Merton costs only 12p a copy to produce

When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

Whenever you see this logo that means there’s a volunteering opportunity to get involved in
Work set to start on new AFC Wimbledon stadium

Representatives from AFC Wimbledon, Merton Council and Galliard Homes have signed a landmark agreement that clears the way for a new stadium for AFC Wimbledon back home in the borough. The new 11,000–20,000-seater stadium at Plough Lane will be part of a development that includes much-needed new homes, retail space and a squash and fitness club. The development will also bring major regeneration and more construction jobs as well as other longer-term employment once the stadium, shops and fitness club are up and running. It also includes improvements to the local bus, road and cycle network. This new development will benefit both the greatly loved club AFC Wimbledon, as well as Merton and the many families and fans who live here. 

find out more
merton.gov.uk/stadium

Help others by returning disability equipment

Have you got disability equipment you don’t use any more? If so, we could re-use it and save thousands of pounds of taxpayers’ money. Last year, we helped hundreds of residents live at home safely by lending them equipment including beds, chairs and mattresses. We re-use nearly 90% of returned equipment, having deep cleaned and safety checked it first. Collection is FREE, so if you or members of your family have any disability equipment that is not being used, please get in touch.

find out more
To arrange collection, 020 8664 8860 (press option 1) or email: admin@croydon-equipment-solutions.com

Get ready for carnival

Mitcham Carnival 2018 takes place on 16 June, so get the date in the diary. Three Kings Piece will be alive with music and dance. There will be stalls selling delicious food and drink inspired by global cuisine, as well as displays from local charities, businesses and community groups. Anyone interested in having a stall at this year’s carnival should visit the website for prices and further information.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/mitchamcarnival

National Libraries Week

Merton’s award-winning libraries celebrated National Libraries Week by inviting local primary school children to redesign the cover of their favourite book. Children aged 5 to 11 years old took to their drawing pads and created some inspiring and colourful designs. If you would like to view the book covers visit the council’s Flickr page and search for ‘National Libraries Week book covers’.

Cover by Hiba, Year 2, William Morris Primary School. Book: Littlest Pet Shop series by Ellie O’Ryan

Find out more
merton.gov.uk

Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough
An outstanding year for Merton’s young people

It’s official! Merton’s Children’s Services Department and its state schools are now amongst the best in the country for progress. Ofsted inspection results in 2017 saw Wimbledon Park Primary, Rutlish and Ricards Lodge join Cricket Green School at the top of the table all achieving ‘Outstanding’. This means all Merton secondary schools are now rated either ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’. Merton’s Children’s Services Department was also rated ‘Good’, placing it in the top five departments in the country, while the Merton Safeguarding Children Board was one of just five in the country to be rated as ‘Outstanding’. This huge achievement for the borough is testament to the committed teachers, governors, social workers and children’s services staff who work tirelessly to ensure children in Merton receive a first class education and service. See page 15 for more on our outstanding secondary schools.

Construction of the new leisure centre continues

Great progress is being made on the construction of the new Morden Leisure Centre which will open for the borough’s families in autumn 2018.

The windows are all in and the building is watertight. The internal walls are being built and the external brickwork is near completion. Both pools are well underway and the diving tower is in place in the 15m by 13m pool, which will have a movable floor.

The state-of-the-art leisure centre will provide residents with first class facilities, accommodating swimming and water-based exercise, diving, gym, café and a studio that will cater for health, fitness and community activities.

The council has already budgeted for the leisure centre, which will be better value to Merton’s council taxpayers as it will cost less to maintain in the long-run than the continuing repairs necessary to keep the current building going.

Fighting for the future of St Helier Hospital

Following a motion agreed by Merton’s councillors, Leader of the Council Stephen Alambritis has written to the Epsom and St Helier University Hospital NHS Trust and Merton’s Clinical Commissioning Group to reinforce its commitment to maintaining all services at St Helier Hospital.

The motion came after the Trust published an engagement document, Providing high quality healthcare services 2020 to 2030, setting out proposals which could see the accident and emergency department and the consultant-led maternity service moved to Epsom and Belmont.

The council is committed to ensuring that a full range of NHS acute services continues at the hospital and is urging residents to support the St Helier Hospital campaign.

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Could you foster for Merton and change a child’s life?

We all want to make Merton a great place for families, and one way you might be able to help is by providing a great family for a Merton child. Fostering is a way of providing a stable family life to a child unable to live at home, and caring can be from one night to a number of years. As the numbers of children coming into care increase, we urgently need more foster carers. Could you help?

The council offers comprehensive, on-going professional training, 24/7 support and mentors, a weekly allowance per child, plus additional grants.

find out more www.fostering.merton.gov.uk

Bond Primary School welcomes royal visit

HRH The Duchess of Cambridge visited children from Bond Primary School in Mitcham on Wednesday 17 January. The Duchess of Cambridge, came to see the work of the Wimbledon Junior Tennis Initiative (WJTI), the AELTC’s local community coaching programme. The WJTI has introduced over 195,000 children in Merton and Wandsworth to tennis.

find out more www.wimbledon.com

WIN AFTERNOON TEA FOR FOUR AT WIMBLEDON

The Wimbledon Foundation, the charity of The All England Lawn Tennis Club, is offering one lucky winner the chance to enjoy afternoon tea with up to three guests in the Wingfield Café.

The Wimbledon Foundation makes a valuable contribution to meeting social needs and reducing inequalities in Merton and Wandsworth by awarding grants totalling over £350,000 a year to charities and community organisations. The Wimbledon Junior Tennis Initiative (WJTI) visits two local primary schools every week and has so far introduced over 190,000 children to tennis.

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

Players are allowed to wear which colours at Wimbledon?

a) Purple and green
b) White
c) White and green

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 30 April 2018.

The competition is to win afternoon tea for a maximum of four people at the Wingfield Café, The All England Lawn Tennis Club, Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AE. The Wingfield Café is open daily except between 18 June 2018 and 21 July 2018. 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.
Merton’s vision for Morden moves a step closer

Merton Council is a step closer to transforming Morden into a vibrant town centre following the announcement of Transport for London’s (TFL) commitment to be a key partner. The deal between Merton and TFL, who own large parts of the town centre, is aimed at delivering a shared vision for the town centre, with great shops and cafes and more business space bringing new job opportunities for local people. Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has highlighted the role that town centres with potential like Morden have for the future of the city. With Morden at the start of the Northern Line, it’s ideally placed to access the capital. The town centre has beautiful parks and open spaces, fantastic schools and the new Morden Leisure Centre which is opening later this year. Morden Court Parade on London Road was shortlisted for a prestigious Royal Institute of British Architects Journal Award. Making more of Morden will help make Merton a great place for families, creating a town centre with a buzzing local economy, and becoming a destination residents from Merton and beyond will enjoy visiting. 

Exercise your democratic right to vote

With Merton heading to the polls for local elections on 3 May, make sure you have your say by registering to vote. Everyone who is 18 and over, and who is registered to vote, has a chance to decide who will be making the decisions in our local area over the next four years. Polling stations will be open on election day across the borough from 7.00am to 10.00pm. The cut-off date for registering to vote in the local elections is Tuesday 17 April. You can register to vote or log a change of address online, by post or over the phone. 

The Wimbledon Foundation, charity of the All England Lawn Tennis Club, recently launched its fourth local grant programme, the Arts and Community Engagement (ACE) Fund, to support a creative project that will engage the local community, particularly disadvantaged groups who face barriers to accessing the arts. Baseless Fabric Theatre has been awarded a grant to create a street opera version of *die Fledermaus* which will be performed in public spaces across Merton and Wandsworth in August 2019. Leading up to this, Baseless Fabric Theatre will run workshops in schools, community centres and care homes across the two boroughs and work with a secondary school to create their own performance. If you were fortunate to catch their promenade version of *Cosi Fan Tutte* last summer, you’ll know this is not to be missed. 

Merton wins prestigious London Borough of Culture funding

Merton has beaten off tough competition from 22 other London councils to secure London Borough of Culture funding. The successful bid focuses on bringing film to the whole of Merton, particularly in the east of the borough. There will be seasons of short films curated by the community and guest curators. These will be played at the new pop-up cinema locations across Merton. 

Championing the arts

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Have your say on more Heathrow flights

If you’re thinking of flying away, why not have your say on Heathrow Airport’s latest plans for expansion? Residents are invited to comment on Heathrow’s plans to build a third runway and move the M25 by 28 March. 

Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough
Volunteer in your local care home

Residents of Carter House Care Home in Raynes Park were treated to a celebratory afternoon tea event in February to mark the annual Dignity Action Day (DAD) celebrations. DAD is a national annual event where members of the community are encouraged to visit anyone they know living in care to make their day as special as possible. The day also highlighted the shortfall in volunteers visiting care homes for the elderly. Volunteers are key to bringing more happiness, conversation and friendship to an elderly person’s life. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Merton Seniors on msfdignityincare@hotmail.com

Rugby legend opens new Colliers Wood Library

Former rugby star, Brian Moore, officially opened the new Colliers Wood Library on Thursday 22 February marking a new chapter for the library. Brian took a tour of the new state-of-the-art facilities, which is fully accessible and dementia-friendly thanks to a partnership with the Alzheimer’s Society.

Fiona Hope unveiled a plaque in memory of her late father, former chief librarian Donald Hope, who the previous library was named in honour of. The library opened its doors on 5 February to visitors excited to see the new building, coffee shop, community meeting rooms, special activity zones and children’s area.

The new Colliers Wood Library is part of Merton’s award-winning libraries, which are going from strength to strength and have some of the highest usage and customer satisfaction of any library service nationally, whilst also being one of the most cost efficient. See page 14 for more on the new library.

Take a stand against abuse

Merton Council is reminding residents of the difference one phone call can make if they are subject to abuse or suspect someone else is. A confidential 24/7 phone line is available for reporting abuse against vulnerable adults. Abuse does not have to be physical, it can also be financial, sexual, psychological or involve neglect. Callers will speak to specially trained staff who will deal with their problem and take action, if necessary, to ensure safety and well-being. Merton Council hopes that by making it easy to pick up the phone, it will give people the help and support they need.

Volunteering makes us feel good, but did you know it can improve your life and even your health? Research has shown helping others can help you too. By giving your time to help those in need through a range of activities, from visiting the elderly to cleaning riverbanks, you can improve your job prospects, make new friends and even burn calories by staying active! Why not experience the benefits for yourself. Volunteer Merton has hundreds of local volunteering opportunities and can help you find the perfect one that matches your interests, skills and availability. National Volunteers’ Week takes place from 1 to 7 June each year and is the perfect time to start your journey.

Become a volunteer

Local young volunteers on the NCS programme helping to raise awareness and funds for community shop, Fayre & Square
Sharing lives for a closer community

Providing a comfortable and safe home for a vulnerable person in the community can be a rewarding experience and certainly helps that person become more independent and confident. My Merton talks to Rochelle Simpson in the council’s Shared Lives team to find out more about how the initiative is helping people in the borough from all walks of life.

Rochelle Simpson is one of the council’s Shared Lives officers working in the Shared Lives team. She has been part of the team for six years.

Asked about her work, she said: “Shared Lives is all about bringing people together, so that those who want to share their home and provide a vulnerable adult with a roof over their head and the stability and security that comes with that are able to do so with the support of the Shared Lives team.”

Rochelle explains the process, “The team look at the carers who have accommodation to offer and the vulnerable adults who have been referred to us either by a social worker or a care worker and assess what the best match would be. Once a match has been found we arrange a meeting between the two parties. If that meeting is successful we meet again along with the social worker to develop a tailor-made support plan which would meet the person’s specific needs. We regularly review the support plans so that adjustments can be made if those needs change.”

The aim of the Shared Lives initiative is to make sure that individuals do all the things they want to do in their daily life. “We want to ensure that they have a family-style environment where they can make their own decisions, think and act for themselves and be part of the local community.”

Individuals in all sorts of situations are part of the Shared Lives initiative, from those recovering from mental health problems, older people, adults with learning disabilities and those that may need a short break after a period of hospitalisation.

Merton’s Shared Lives scheme has been rated ‘Good’ by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The five standards that are assessed are safety, care, responsiveness, effectiveness and leadership.

Rochelle explains how the Shared Lives carers support the vulnerable adults, “A carer’s role is extremely varied and can be anything from helping individuals keep healthy and active to managing their money, sharing domestic tasks like cooking and cleaning and completing forms. They also help them to understand letters, meet new people and support them in learning new skills.”

What Rochelle loves about her job is seeing the improvement people make once they are settled in a welcoming and caring home environment. “I am always amazed at the number of people who contact us opening their home to strangers in need.”

find out more
merton.gov.uk/shared-lives-scheme
Budgeting wisely for difficult times

Every year the council has to balance its budget for the coming year so it can continue to deliver the services residents need. We have to decide how much to spend on local services and how much we are going to ask local residents to pay in council tax. My Merton looks at this year’s budget.

With money tight, and the country’s economic outlook uncertain, it’s never been more important for Merton Council to take an efficient and organised approach to its finances. Every year, by the start of March, we finalise the coming year’s budget, including the level of council tax, and set out longer-term spending plans for the coming three years too. In an increasingly tough financial environment it’s vital to plan ahead.

In 2010, the council received more from the government than was raised by council tax, but since then Merton has faced year-on-year reductions in central government funding. That austerity has come at the same time as a squeeze on household incomes, which is why, in spite of the need for additional income, we have sought to keep council tax increases to a minimum.

The loss of money from the government, together with the fight to keep council tax low, has made it crucial for the council to provide lean, efficient services. The focus is on offering value for money, while prioritising help for the most vulnerable residents of our community.
Meanwhile, a partnership approach to building means there is now a new library in Colliers Wood – read more on page 14. And our innovative library volunteer programme, launched in 2010, has won awards and allowed the council to offer valuable experience to residents, while keeping our libraries open at a time when many councils have been forced into cuts and closures.

In a borough that strives to be a good place for families, the budget has also been increased for services for our older relatives. With people living longer, often with health needs or dementia that require services offered by the council, Merton added an extra £9m to last year’s budget for adult social care, with a further small increase this year. Council tax went up by 3%, to raise around a quarter of that amount, and in 2018, it will go up again by another 3% to raise the next quarter – about 66p a week on a typical B and D bill.

Cllr Mark Allison, Cabinet Member for Finance said: “This has been a tough decade for families’ finances, with less money to go around and so many more things you would like to spend it on. It’s been exactly the same for the council. We want Merton to be a great place for families to live and grow up, but that means having to be careful with the pennies. By taking a business-like approach, making tough decisions, and working with partners to be more efficient, we’re able to have a new library and a new leisure centre, and more support for our older people and children’s services. And with austerity not likely to end for some time, we’ll continue to do our best to fight for what our residents want.”

find out more about the council’s budget for 2018/19 at merton.gov.uk/budget and read the results of our last residents’ survey at merton.gov.uk/residentssurvey
COMPETITION

Win a family ticket to Awful Auntie at New Wimbledon Theatre

When Stella sets off to visit London with her parents, Lord and Lady Saxby, she has no idea her life is in danger! Waking up three months later, only her Aunt Alberta can tell Stella what has happened. But not everything Alberta tells her turns out to be true and Stella quickly discovers she’s in for the fight of her life against her very own awful Auntie! From the award-winning West End producers of Gangsta Granny comes the world premiere of David Walliams’ amazing tale of frights, fights and friendship, featuring a very large owl, a very small ghost and a very Awful Auntie!

Visit merton.gov.uk/mymerton to enter and answer the following question. The closing date for entries is 13 April 2018.

Who wrote Awful Auntie?

a) Roald Dahl
b) David Walliams
c) Jacqueline Wilson

Terms and conditions:
The tickets are non-transferable. There are no cash alternatives, accommodation or travel included in the prize. The competition is for a family ticket (four tickets) to see Awful Auntie at New Wimbledon Theatre, valid on any performance between 24 and 28 April 2018.

Two Merton GP Hubs

You can now see a GP seven days a week

Both hubs offer ‘on the day’ and pre-bookable appointments during the evening Mon-Fri from 5-8pm and 8am-8pm on Saturdays. One hub is also open every Sunday 8am-8pm.

Nurse appointments for wound care are available. Telephone consultations and advance appointments can also now be booked. Call your GP or 111 out of hours.

Please note the hub is only available for patients registered with a Merton GP practice and an appointment is needed.

merton leisure kids activities

Loads of holiday fun right on your doorstep

merton.gov.uk/leisure

Prices from £10
100 years of votes for women

2018 marks 100 years since women were first given the vote in this country. *My Merton* finds out about the celebrations in Merton and how the borough played its part in the women's suffrage movement.

Celebrations begin with the borough’s Heritage Discovery Day, which takes place from 12.30 to 4.30pm on 12 May. The programme includes bitesize history talks on women’s suffrage, photo displays, craft activities and a heritage quiz. You can watch rare film footage of the suffragettes provided by the London Screen Archives Kinovan and find out about the work of local museums and heritage organisations. Entry is free.

Between May and October Merton Heritage Service will be staging debates, guided walks, exhibitions and reminiscence sessions linked to the women’s suffrage centenary. The John Innes Society is planning to recreate one of the suffragette garden parties held in the grounds of Dorset Hall. In a touching gesture, they are also seeking to get a new rose named after local suffragette Rose Lamartine Yates, who lived at the property from 1906 to 1935.

From 1910, Rose was the Organising Secretary of the Wimbledon WSPU. Under her leadership the branch organised meetings, fundraising events and marches, including a rally on Wimbledon Common which attracted 20,000 participants.

Other notable Merton residents involved in the suffrage movement included the Victorian social reformer Josephine Butler, who also campaigned on issues including prostitution and Higher Education for women.

Dr. Francis Bather was instrumental in the foundation of what later became the Wimbledon Women’s Social and Political Union and designed its distinctive windmill banner. Sophia Duleep Singh, was the daughter of an exiled Indian maharajah, who lived at Cannizaro House for many years. A God-daughter of Queen Victoria, she later became a suffragette, joining demonstrations, selling newspapers and giving speeches supporting “Votes for Women.”

In 1909 the Wimbledon WSPU opened a shop in Victoria Crescent (now the site of Wimbledon Piazza), to raise funds for their campaign work. This sold handmade goods, as well as suffragette newspapers and china.

Latimer Road Baths (now Wimbledon Leisure Centre), was a venue for suffragette meetings and lectures, as was Wimbledon Theatre and Vestry Hall, Mitcham.

For the latest on centenary events visit merton.gov.uk/heritage and look out for updates on social media.
Library opens a new chapter for Colliers Wood

Colliers Wood’s brand new library is now open! *My Merton* looks at some of the library’s unique features, from the living roof to the dementia-friendly interior.

The new library opened its doors on Monday 5 February to over 1,000 residents. Since then visitors have been browsing the library’s three floors of books and using the computers, nipping into the new coffee shop and taking part in free family and community events.

Public involvement has been central to the project, with users consulted on the facilities needed and the interior design of the space. As well as having more room for books, new study areas and activity zones, it has a larger children’s library, more computers, improved Wi-Fi facilities and three meeting rooms, available to hire for activities and classes.

It is fully accessible and, following consultation with the Alzheimer’s Society, its wall colours, flooring and furniture have been planned to make it Merton’s first fully dementia-friendly library.

The opening comes after negotiations between Merton Council and Rocco Homes led to the developer investing £2 million in upgrading the old library. It is part of a project to replace the previous, very dated building with brand new facilities, including 60 new homes. As a result of the council’s business-like approach, the cost to local tax-payers of this state-of-the-art facility, which will be enjoyed by generations of families to come, was just £200,000.

Drawing from the area’s architectural heritage, the building has been constructed from the same material as the iconic Colliers Wood Tube Station, designed by Charles Holden. It has excellent green credentials too, with solar panels and a ‘living roof’ of plants that provides energy-efficient insulation, as well as biodiversity. Among the new apartments, 75% are offered at affordable rent by Metropolitan Housing Association.

Merton’s award-winning library service is going from strength to strength and the redevelopment of Colliers Wood Library is another important part of the plans to further develop libraries across Merton.

You can find the new library just a minute’s walk from Colliers Wood Tube Station. Visit merton.gov.uk/libraries for opening hours.
Merton secondary schools are top of the class

A record number of Merton families are applying to the borough’s state secondary schools following the announcement that local schools have topped a national league table for the progress pupils make. My Merton takes a closer look.

Figures released late last year by the Department for Education revealed that Merton was the best-performing borough nationally for the ‘Progress 8’ scores at our state schools. The scores measure how much progress pupils make from 11 to 16 years old. The announcement was quickly followed by the news that Wimbledon’s Ricards Lodge High School has been rated ‘Outstanding’ in its latest Ofsted inspection. Ofsted praised the progress the school has made in a number of areas. Comments in the report include; “Leaders and governors have significantly improved the school since its last inspection. It is now outstanding” and “Pupils develop into confident, mature, reflective and resilient young women.” The result brings the number of Merton secondary schools with the highest rating possible to four – Rutlish School was named ‘Outstanding’ in June 2017, Harris Academy Merton and Ursuline High School are also ‘Outstanding’, with Wimbledon College retaining their ‘Good’ rating at the start of the year.

Merton’s exam results are also at an all-time high with students achieving good A level results. Raynes Park High School and St Mark’s Academy are also performing particularly well in applied general qualifications, with an average grade of distinction. These rigorous level 3 advanced qualifications for 16 to 19-year-olds allow students to continue their education through applied learning and develop the fundamental knowledge and practical skills that are valued in universities and the workplace.

With schools in Merton performing so well, and the borough cementing its reputation as a great place for families, more parents are choosing to live in the borough and send their children to our local comprehensives. To satisfy this increasing popularity, the council has been planning carefully to ensure that there are enough places for local families. A brand new school, the Harris Wimbledon Academy, run by the Harris Foundation, will welcome its first students this September. It will open first at the former Merton Adult Education Centre on Whatley Avenue, before moving to South Wimbledon where it will accommodate 1,150 pupils.

Meanwhile, sixty additional places per year (300 in total) have been added to the Harris Academy Merton. The council will then monitor demand closely to see if any further permanent expansion is needed for future years.

find out more about the borough’s schools and applying for places at merton.gov.uk/schools.
community safety
Keeping Merton safe

Getting to know your local

*My Merton* caught up with Merton’s dedicated ward officers (DWOs) to find out how you can contact them.

Following a decision by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, every borough in the Metropolitan Police area now has its own dedicated ward officers (DWOs) working closely with local people to provide a reassuring presence and respond to issues that concern them.

In Merton each of our 20 council wards has three DWOs – two police constables and one Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

While neighbourhood policing isn’t a new thing, the number of ‘bobbies on the beat’ across London has been increased after Sadiq made the commitment in his latest Police and Crime plan.

The plan also gives local DWO teams the freedom to set many of their own priorities based on the needs of their areas, at the same time as focussing on priority areas like anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and hate crime. In Merton these also include local concerns about street drinking, burglary, moped and vehicle crime.

If you haven’t met your DWO team yet, you can contact them by email or phone or chat to them while they’re patrolling your neighbourhood.

Talk to the team about any crime and anti-social behaviour issues. However, to report a serious crime, or one that’s happening now always call 999. To report non-emergency crimes, or to give information to the police call 101.

Merton police also have a strong social media presence, with PCSO Dave Haywood responsible for posting to Twitter, Facebook and neighbourhood forum Nextdoor. DWOs have their own Facebook pages too, where you can find out more about local issues and give your views. But remember, to report a specific crime or for an immediate response, call the police as above.

**Wimbledon**

Trinity ward: PC Mike Pacitti, PC Tom Queen, PCSO Gabi Di Maria, 020 8721 2453 • Trinity.SNT@met.police.uk

Dundonald ward: PC Doug Walter, PC Curtis Glover, PCSO Karen North, 020 8721 2450 • Dundonald.SNT@met.police.uk

Abbey ward: PC Pete Beesley, PC James Peppitt, PCSO Nicola Cleeter, 020 8649 3584 • MertonAbbey.SNT@met.police.uk

Hillside ward: PC Trevor Walsh, PC Tony Watts, PCSO Chrissie Storey, 020 8721 2458 • Hillside.SNT@met.police.uk

Wimbledon Park ward: PC Paul Roberts, PC Gerry Byford, PCSO Lisa Matthews, 020 8721 2452 WimbledonPark.SNT@met.police.uk

Raynes Park ward: PC Lee Spear, PC Oliver Thursby, PCSO James Cushing, 020 8721 2459 • RaynesPark.SNT@met.police.uk

Village ward: PC Matt Rigby, PC Dean Shaw, PCSO Shelley Collar, 020 8721 2457 • Village.SNT@met.police.uk

Policing the Chariot Festival at Shri Ganapathi Temple

Officers visiting local schoolchildren
Ask for Angela anywhere in Merton

With an increased awareness of sexual violence and harassment, an initiative which was launched in December 2016 to help people in threatening situations has been making the news. Ask Angela is a scheme running in bars and clubs where staff have been specially-trained to help anyone who feels unsafe. Just go to the bar, ask for 'Angela' and you'll get help to find a taxi and leave safely. The scheme now covers 95% of licensed premises across the borough.

Our One Stop Shop is here to help

If you or someone you know is suffering domestic abuse, contact Merton’s One Stop Shop, based at Morden Baptist Church, open Mondays 9am to 12 noon. The One Stop Shop is closed on bank holidays but you can call Victim Support on 020 7801 1777, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Always call 999 if you are in danger. For more advice visit merton.gov.uk/domesticviolence.
Could you foster for Merton and change a child’s life?

We are urgently looking for ordinary people to do something extraordinary, can you help? More young people and siblings are coming into care, if you have a desire to help get in touch today.

**Foster for Merton and we can offer you:**
- Comprehensive, on-going professional training
- 24/7 support and mentors
- An allowance of up to £507 per week, per child

Come along to one of our Information Events at Morden Baptist Church on:
- 28 March at 6.30pm
- 11 April at 10.30am
- 25 April at 6.30pm
- 9 May at 10.30am
- 23 May at 6.30pm
- 6 June at 10.30am
- 20 June at 6.30pm

Call us today on 0800 073 0874 / 020 8545 4070 or visit merton.gov.uk/fostering for more details
Take a fresh approach to your health this spring

Longer days and lighter evenings are the perfect time to take a fresh look at your health and wellbeing. *My Merton* finds out about the help available to feel happier and healthier this spring.

### Helping you go Smokefree

You may have seen TV adverts for the NHS Smokefree campaign which show the harm smoking does to your body. Smoking is the biggest cause of preventable death in England. The good news is that once you stop, your body will begin to recover and, with the right support, quitting is easier than you think. Contact One You Merton for expert, personalised support, including nicotine replacement therapy. Visit www.oneyoumerton.org

### A new (One) You

Lots of us begin the year with good intentions – to eat well, drink less and move more – but by the time spring comes along those resolutions are hard to maintain. The key to staying motivated is having someone on your side, which is where One You Merton can help. It offers free, friendly telephone support from local health advisors seven days a week. Find out more at www.oneyoumerton.org and take the How Are You lifestyle quiz to kick-start a new you!

### Tackling food poverty

With a growing number of foodbanks across the UK, including a fantastic project in Merton, which is run by the local Elim church, the issue of food poverty has risen up the agenda. The council is doing its best to help those most in need, and has been working with the charity Sustainable Merton on an action plan offering bespoke solutions for local families. These include projects to re-use surplus food and offer lessons in food preparation and meal-planning, and an expanded Healthy Start Voucher scheme, which provides free vitamins to eligible pregnant women and children under four.

### New antenatal service

Mums-to-be and their partners are being invited to new antenatal groups and drop-in clinics run by Merton’s health visiting team. The groups, available to women from 28-weeks gestation, take place at local children’s centres and cover issues including bonding, safe sleeping and breastfeeding. They are also a great opportunity to meet local health visitors. Call 0330 0539 264 to find out more.
Our commitment
for a clean, tidy
and safe borough

The London Borough of Merton is part of the South London Waste Partnership which is made up of four London Boroughs (Croydon, Kingston, Merton and Sutton) that are working together to provide better value waste management services to their residents. Since 1 April 2017, Veolia has been delivering waste and recycling collections and street cleansing services across Merton to ensure cost savings and improved environmental outcomes. It has been a challenging transition involving new staff changes, new vehicles and a different collection methodology in our street cleansing services.

We are sorry for how this process of change has affected certain parts of the borough. The cleanliness of Merton is our priority and we are committed to making immediate improvements to specific areas in the Borough that have been identified.

On behalf of the teams in Veolia, we want to thank you for your patience and understanding. We have so far made improvements with additional sweeping resources and we have increased the number of vehicles to collect flytipping which has helped solve this growing issue. We will continue to work with the London Borough of Merton and its residents to improve our performance levels to reflect your civic pride and our overall aims for a clean, tidy and safe borough.

If you spot any litter or flytipping, please report it online at merton.gov.uk and we will highlight it to our teams.

Thank you again for your patience and understanding.
Help us tackle flytipping in your area

We know you care about where you live and want it kept clean and tidy. This is why we spend £5 million every year clearing rubbish from our streets and fining people who have dropped litter and dumped rubbish. *My Merton* looks at the cost and number of fines issued and how we can all help keep Merton clean.

More than 40 people in Merton have received fines of £400 for dumping rubbish under new rules allowing the council to issue fixed penalty notices for small-scale flytipping.

The punishments have included fines for items of furniture left in the street, bags of rubbish placed beside litter bins, or rubbish left on grass verges or roadsides, and are on top of the 4,000 fines of £80 issued each year for dropping litter in town centres.

Where larger-scale fly-tips are concerned, the council will seek prosecutions which bring much larger fines and a criminal record.

If you have rubbish to dispose of make sure you place it in a black sack and leave it at the boundary of your property on your collection day or take it to the Garth Road recycling centre. Never place household waste in, or alongside, litter bins.

We know clean streets are a big priority for residents, and the council spends £5 million each year on street cleaning. You can help us by:

- Reporting any incidents of flytipping — merton.gov.uk/litter or call 020 8274 4901
- Disposing of your old furniture responsibly — Either donate to charity, sell it or use our free bulky waste collection service – as long as you’re up-to-date with your council tax, we will remove up to five bags or furniture items every three months. merton.gov.uk/waste.
- Becoming a Street Champion — join more than 60 groups and individuals around the borough who have signed up to be the eyes and ears of their community telling us about local issues. merton.gov.uk/streetchampions or email environmental.development@merton.gov.uk
- Joining a clean-up operation — we organise regular litter collections and support residents wishing to organise their own. Find the latest dates on the council website or social media.
A cleaner, greener borough

It’s 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 other services. My Merton gets the latest on being green in Merton and how we can all do our bit to help...

Egg-cellent ways to help the planet

More than 90 million chocolate eggs will be purchased in the UK this Easter. This is great news if you’ve got a sweet tooth, but with many of these eggs packaged in foil, plastic and card too, it means a big spike in household rubbish.

We’ve put together five top tips for making Easter a bit greener this year...

- Choose chocolate eggs with minimal packaging that’s also recyclable. Eggs and bunnies just wrapped in foil are perfect.
- Recycle your packaging and Easter cards. Card and foil go in your green box or communal recycling bin. Some plastic can be recycled – check for the ‘widely recycled’ symbol.
- Decorate boiled or blown eggs instead of buying plastic ones and use paper or card, not plastic, for Easter crafts.
- If you’re entertaining family and friends, plan meals in advance and take a list out shopping to avoid the temptation to over-buy. Find creative ideas for leftovers at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com
- Recycle your peelings and plate scrapings in your food waste bin. If you don’t have one, join the scheme for free now – our website and contact numbers are at the end of this feature.

Small Change, Big Difference

Merton residents have been creating art out of raw food and sharing their savvy cooking tips in a campaign to reduce London’s food waste mountain, which is currently costing us £1.4 million a year.

Small Change, Big Difference is an innovative pilot scheme, funded by the EU LIFE Programme. As well as helping to cut down on waste it also encourages healthy, sustainable eating and recycling of inedible leftovers, using the council’s food waste scheme.

Local residents have told us their favourite food waste hacks – from cooking up easy chicken soup to freezing pesto in ice cube trays. Watch their tips in the ‘stuff we love’ section at www.smallchangebigdifference.london

Students at Wimbledon College of Arts teamed up with the council to create a work of art as part of the campaign called “Cornucopia” – a food waste horn of plenty.

There’s more to come from Small Change, Big Difference this year, across London, including pop-up restaurants, exclusive cookery classes and mouth-watering recipes – sign up to get involved on the website (above) or using #smallchange on social media.
Garden waste

Spring is a great time to sign up for our garden waste collection service which costs £70 per year for one garden waste bin, or 25 bags. We will collect your garden waste every fortnight throughout the year, including grass cuttings, hedge trimmings, twigs and leaves and you can sign up at any time.

Merton joins world record attempt

June will see an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the simultaneous launch of a flotilla of plastic boats. The aim is to highlight the environmental impact of plastic waste. Events taking place across the world will contribute to the challenge – including one in Merton. All the boats will be made from recycled plastic bottles and will be recycled again once the attempt has been made.

Schools can sign up and take part in the flotilla at 2pm on 27 June 2018 at the lake, Wimbledon Park Watersports and Outdoor Centre.

Did you know?

Every year we collect real Christmas trees from residents across the borough and recycle them into amazing soil conditioner that’s available free to residents. This year we collected 4,000 trees and made 81 tonnes of conditioner, which is available to collect from Garth Road recycling centre.

Find out more

For rubbish and recycling information and to order food waste bins visit merton.gov.uk/waste or for garden waste visit merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste

For any waste queries call us on 020 8274 4902.

Getting ready for wheelie bins

This October will see changes to the way your recycling and household waste is collected, with a new, borough-wide wheelie bin scheme. Bins will be delivered to households before roll-out in October along with information explaining how the scheme will operate in your street. Households will continue to receive a weekly collection, with two collections (food and recycling) one week and three collections (food, recycling and general waste) on alternate weeks. Paper and card will be collected separately from tins, plastic, glass and cartons.

If you don’t have a food waste bin, you can order one today!
£5 off
Spend £35 or more in one transaction

Offer available in the garden centre only. Offer excludes gas, gift vouchers, delivery charges, membership and catering purchases. This voucher cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers.

Offer valid on presentation of this voucher. Only one voucher per transaction, per customer. Copies will not be accepted, no cash alternative. Vouchers will only be accepted with a valid postcode.

Postcode: __________

Get the most from your garden this spring with expert advice, great offers and top quality plants. From creative displays to popular spring plants, you'll find inspiration in abundance.

National Trust
Morden Hall Park Garden Centre,
Morden Hall Road,
Morden, Surrey SM4 5JD
(020 8648 9755)
**Arts and entertainment**

- **Academy Choir Wimbledon – Mozart and Haydn**
  Saturday 24 March 2018, 7.30pm
  St John’s Church, Spencer Hill SW19 4NZ. Tickets £5 to £25. The Academy Choir Wimbledon and London Mozart Players are performing Mozart’s Mass in C Minor and Haydn’s Te Deum in C.
  [www.academychoirwimbledon.co.uk](http://www.academychoirwimbledon.co.uk)

- **Attic Theatre Company singing workshops**
  Every Thursday until 29 March 2018 at two venues
  Attic Theatre Company runs a weekly singing session for people over 55. This is a drop in session and requires no sign up or audition.
  [www.attictheatrecompany.com/going-for-a-song](http://www.attictheatrecompany.com/going-for-a-song)

- **Children’s Theatre Musical Workshop**
  Monday 9–Friday 13 April 2018, 10.30am–1.30pm
  Have you always wanted to give musical theatre a go? Are you aged between seven and 12 years? Book now to take part in Annie the musical.
  [www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk)

- **Pinocchio**
  Until Sunday 8 April 2018
  The Colour House Theatre, Merton Abbey Mills, Watermill Way, Wimbledon. £12 adult/£10 child. Shows every Saturday and Sunday at 2pm and 4pm. Come and enjoy this timeless adventure and of course the lessons to be learnt!
  [www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk)

- **MACCA: The Concert – Celebrating the music of Paul McCartney and The Greatest Hits of the Beatles**
  Thursday 29 March 2018
  Tickets from £21.25. Starring West End leading man Emanuele Angeletti (Let It Be) as Paul McCartney, this is a celebration of the music of a legend. In the first concert of its kind to tour the UK and Europe, Maccas: The Concert, featuring acclaimed West End performers and using state-of-the-art visual media projection throughout, celebrates McCartney’s entire solo career from 1970 to 2016 including all his best loved hits, the acclaimed Wings over the World 1975–6 Concert Tour and a selection of Beatles favourites.

- **Awful Auntie**
  Tuesday 24–Saturday 28 April 2018
  Tickets from £26.50. When Stella sets off to visit London with her parents, Lord and Lady Saxby, she has no idea her life is in danger! Waking up three months later, only her Aunt Alberta tells her turns out to be true and Stella quickly discovers she’s in for the fight of her life against her very own Awful Auntie! From the award-winning West End producers of Gangsta Granny comes the world premiere of David Walliams’ amazing tale of frights, fights and friendship, featuring a very large owl, a very small ghost and a very Awful Auntie!

- **Matthew Bourne’s Cinderella**
  Tuesday 1–Saturday 5 May 2018, Tuesday–Saturday 7.30pm,
  Thursday and Saturday 2.30pm
  Tickets from £25. Following the sold-out and critical success of double Olivier Award-winning The Red Shoes, New Adventures return with one of their most popular and beloved productions, Matthew Bourne’s Cinderella – a thrilling and evocative love story, set in London during the Second World War, which forms part of the company’s 30th anniversary celebrations. Matthew Bourne’s interpretation of the classic fairy tale, has, at its heart, a true war-time romance. A chance meeting results in a magical night for Cinderella and her dashing young RAF pilot, together just long enough to fall in love before being parted by the horrors of the Blitz.

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**New Wimbledon Theatre**

93 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1QG

Book online [www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon](http://www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon)

Telephone booking 0844 871 7646

Group bookings 0844 871 7696

Access bookings 0844 871 7677 (no booking fees apply)

**Artists and entertainment**

- **YOUTH**
- **SENIOR CITIZENS**
- **FAMILY**
- **HEALTH & FITNESS**
- **WALKS & TALKS**
- **FAIRS & EXHIBITIONS**

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**Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough**
**MY MERTON’S BOOK CHOICE**

**The Punishment She Deserves** 
by Elizabeth George

Award-winning author Elizabeth George delivers another masterpiece of suspense in her 17th book in the Inspector Lynley series.

When a Member of Parliament shows up at New Scotland Yard requesting an investigation into the suicide of the son of one of his constituents in the beautiful town of Ludlow, the Assistant Commissioner sees two opportunities in this request: the first is to have an MP owing him a favour, and the second is to get rid of Detective Sergeant Barbara Havers, whose career at the Met has been hanging by a thread for quite some time. So he assigns Havers to the case and for good measure partners her with the one person who shares his wish to see the back of her, Detective Chief Superintendent Isabelle Ardery.

**Other books:**
- The Liverpool Matchgirl by Lyn Andrews
- Girl on Fire by Tony Parsons
- The Man I Think I Know by Mike Gayle
- The Flower Seller by Linda Finlay
- Nadia and Kaye disaster chef: simple recipes for cooks who can’t by Nadia Sawalha

**eMagazines and eAudiobooks**

The new RBdigital app has been developed to give even easier access to Merton Library eMagazines and eAudiobooks. Download today so you can enjoy some of the new titles, you can even access back issues of over 700 eMagazine titles. Don’t worry if you’ve downloaded the ‘Libby’ app, you can still continue to use it.

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**Arts and entertainment continued**

- **Marryat Players String Orchestra**
  Thursday 12 April 2018, 8.30–9.30pm
  The Great Hall at King’s College School, Southside, Wimbledon, SW19 4TT.
  Free. Don’t miss the acclaimed Marryat Players Orchestra for young musicians conducted by Robert Max in the Great Hall of King’s College School for a one hour performance of Mozart and more.
  [find out more](http://www.marryatplayers.com)

- **Elgar’s Dream of Gerontius**
  Saturday 9 June 2018, 8pm
  Sacred Heart Church, Edge Hill, SW19 4UL.
  [find out more](http://www.sacredheartmusic.co.uk/concerts/tickets)

- **Charity Ball 2018**
  Saturday 28 April, 6–11pm
  Chak89, 105 Bond Road, Mitcham, CR4 3HG.
  £75. Civic dinner and fundraising evening in aid of the Mayor’s charities – Merton Mencap and Commonside Community Development Trust.
  To book a table or apply for a sponsorship package please contact the Mayor’s Office: 020 8545 3517
Polka Theatre
240, The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1SB
Box office: 020 8543 4888
www.polka theatre.com

Chocolate Cake
Friday 23 March–Sunday 13 May 2018
Adapted by Peter Glanville and Barb Jungr. Music and songs by Barb Jungr. Follow the adventures of two brothers and the night-time disappearance of a chocolate cake in this scrumptious new musical adaptation by the creators of We’re Going on a Bear Hunt and How to Hide a Lion from Michael Rosen’s beloved poem Chocolate Cake, which has just been published as a picture book.

This is My Bed
Wednesday 13–Sunday 24 June 2018
English Touring Opera in association with Polka Theatre. There’s one thing about your bed. It’s your very own bed. Except somebody else seems to think it’s their bed too. And then the bed itself has its own ideas, and can turn itself into a bus or a train or a rocket. And when a bear turns up one night it whiskers you off to meet the very things you’re frightened of. Thank goodness there are some unexpected friends to help you along your way.

Double Act
Friday 15 June–Sunday 5 August 2018
By Jacqueline Wilson. Adapted and directed by Vicky Ireland. Meet Ruby and Garnet. They’re twins, identical and inseparable – and do absolutely everything together. But their lives are about to change. Recently, Dad’s gone a bit weird. He’s been acting strange ever since he started dating that frizzy dizzy Rose. And now he’s only gone and bought a bookshop in the country...

Wandsworth to Morden walk along the Wandle
Saturday 2 June 2018, 9.30am–1pm
Wandsworth Town Station. Free. A five mile walk to Morden Hall Park along the Wandle Trail.

Wimbledon Common walk
Saturday 23 June 2018, 2–3.30pm
Mitcham Junction Station. Free. A three to four mile walk visiting the ponds and hills of Mitcham Common.

Learning Disability Liaison Nursing Team at St George’s Hospital
Tuesday 19 June 2018, 11am–1pm
High Path Community Resource Centre, 63 High Path, South Wimbledon. Free. Find out how the team can support you to plan for a patient’s admission, treatment and discharge.

Walks and talks
Know Your Rights!
Friday 23 March 2018, 10am–12 noon
High Path Community Resource Centre, 63 High Path, South Wimbledon. Free. What is a judicial review? How to challenge decisions in Adult Social Care.

Wandle Industrial Museum and walk
Sunday 15 April 2018, 2–4pm
Mitcham Junction Station. £1.50 includes entrance to Wandle Industrial Museum and refreshments. A three to four mile walk around Mitcham.

Wandsworth to Morden walk from Carshalton to Mitcham.

              Techtopia Festival
Thursday 24 May–Sunday 3 June 2018
Celebrate, explore and question how technological innovation shapes all our lives and thinking through a thrilling and exhilarating programme of theatre from the UK and beyond, interactive workshops, debates and unique creative learning experiences.

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Health and fitness

- **Pilates**
  Raynes Park Library
  Thursdays, 11am
  £10. Feel better and energised from the first session!
  [find out more]
  laura.pilateslondon@gmail.com
  www.ldapilates.com
  South Mitcham Community Centre
  Saturdays, 9.45am
  £3. Increases core muscle strength and muscle tone.

- **Cranleigh Tennis and Social Club**
  Any Sunday afternoon, 2-4pm or Friday mornings 9.30-11am
  Behind 1 Cranleigh Road, Merton Park, SW19 3LX.
  Free. Come and try out our new artificial clay tennis courts.
  [find out more]
  www.cranleightennis.co.uk

- **Exercise classes for over 55s**
  The Merton and Morden Guild, 34a Aberconway Road, Morden, SM4 5LF.
  £4 per session with the first class free. Weekly exercise classes across the borough for all abilities from chair bases/chair assisted to dynamic exercise.
  [find out more]
  Merton and Morden Guild on 020 8640 1640

- **Wimbledon Park Bowls Club open morning**
  Saturday 26 May 2018, 12 noon-6pm
  Wimbledon Park Bowls Club, Wimbledon Park, Revelstoke Road, Southfields, SW19 7HX.
  Free. A great chance to receive free coaching as we welcome you to try the sport of bowls at our friendly, welcoming club.
  [find out more]
  www.wimbledonparkbowlsclub.co.uk

- **Hearts and Minds Support Group**
  A weekly drop-in group for any one aged 14 to 25 with mental health issues. Run by volunteers with lived experience of mental illness themselves, the group provides a relaxed space and offers a range of different creative and social activities. Anyone can come along whether they wish to join in with the activities or just have a friendly chat. It is non-judgemental, non-clinical and completely free.
  [find out more]
  heartsandmindsinfo@gmail.com;
  Facebook @HeartsandMindsPS;
  Twitter @heartsand_minds
Buying solar panels made easy!

Solar Together London is here to help you get high-quality solar panels at a competitive price through the power of group buying. To find out more about our hassle-free approach, and to register your interest visit our website today.

www.solartogether.co.uk/merton

SOLAR TOGETHER LONDON

GROUP BUYING SCHEME FOR SOLAR PANELS

MAYOR OF LONDON

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

Mitcham Horticultural Society's Spring Show
Saturday 24 March 2018, 2pm
St Marks Church, St Marks Road, Mitcham. Free. A show that brings spring flowers, colour and fragrance to St Marks Hall. There will also be teas and cakes available for sale. Everybody welcome.

May Fair
Monday 7 May 2018, 1-4pm
St Saviour's Church, Grand Drive, SW20 9DL. Free. May Fair with May Queen, maypole dancing, entertainment, games and sideshows, grand draw and stalls, barbecue and other refreshments.

find out more http://stsaviour.net

Merton Dog Watch
Saturday 12 May 2018, 10am-4pm
Morden Park (bandstand), London Road, Morden, SM4 5HE. Free entry. Dog flyball, temptation alley, food and drink, raffle, fun for the whole family, ‘Ask the Vet’, canine/animal charity stalls, scurry runs, run by Loyal Paws and Paul’s doggie day care.

find out more
www.mordenfunday.org/merton-dog-watch-2018

1st Lower Morden Scout Group
Bow Lane, off Lower Morden Lane, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4SJ.
Subscription applies on formally joining. We are a uniformed youth organisation and are an open, co-educational, active and community based Scout Group. We host all the sections from age six up to the age of 18 and welcome new members – young or old!

find out more
www.1stlowermorden.org.uk

Mitcham Horticultural Society’s Spring Show

© Photodisc

Family
Family

- **Easter holiday tennis camp**
  Tuesday 3–Friday 13 April 2018, 11am–5pm
  Behind No 1 Cranleigh Road, Merton Park, London, SW19 3LX. Prices start from £7.20. For ages three to 16 and for all abilities, there is something for everyone. Children learn to play tennis and get to practice their ball skills in a fun and safe environment.

  [Find out more](http://www.limitlesstennis.co.uk/holidaycamps)

**Luna Cinema**

This June, The Luna Cinema transforms the beautiful setting of Wimbledon Park into London’s most exciting open air cinema.

- **Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri** Friday 22 June
- **Dirty Dancing** Saturday 23 June 2018
- **Notting Hill** Sunday 24 June 2018

So what are you waiting for? Round up your friends or get planning that date night, grab a picnic or enjoy the delicious hot food and full bar at every screening! Capacities are strictly limited and all tickets must be booked in advance. Head to [thelunacinema.com](http://thelunacinema.com) for details.
Register to vote

3 May local elections

Don’t miss the bus

If you have moved into the area you now need 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. If you have just turned 18 or moved to the area, make sure you get heard and register to vote. Go online and register, all you need is your National Insurance number and date of birth. Make sure you have registered to vote by Tuesday 17 April.

gov.uk/register-to-vote
Kirsten Heard, Headteacher of Raynes Park High School

Following the announcement that Merton was the best-performing borough in the country for the progress pupils make between 11 and 16, we meet the Headteacher of Raynes Park High School, Kirstin Heard, to talk about what makes a good school.

Why did you decide to become a teacher?
I wanted to make a difference; seeing students leave school with the best set of exam results as well as being prepared for the next chapter in their life, makes me very happy. I also believe that learning is for life; no two days are the same and teaching has certainly kept me busy for the last 24 years!

How do you maintain high standards?
I am very clear that I have high expectations in all that we do and high aspirations for all our students. We are committed to driving up standards – smart uniform, regular attendance and good behaviour in and outside school. We are also very proud of our strong pastoral care, which enables us to meet the personal, social and academic needs of our students.

Why is Raynes Park High School performing so well at applied general qualifications?
The style and structure of these courses has ensured students really thrive at this level in applied subjects including IT, business studies, PE, health and social care, setting them in good stead for university and employment.

How is Raynes Park involved in the BECSLink (Business, Education, Charity and Sport)?
On Friday 16 March Raynes Park High will become the first state school in the country to be an accredited BECSLink community! Thanks to this partnership and the Tim Henman Foundation, we will be able to offer scholarships to our students.

find out more www.rphs.org.uk