Fire Cadets at the ready
Young people gaining skills and qualifications

Enforcement in action
The latest on prosecutions in the borough
Just a few weeks ago I was at the opening of the new centre for adults with learning disabilities at Leyton Road. It was a fantastic celebration and a privilege to chat with service users and the staff and residents who helped make it happen.

The centre is Merton at its very best, a prime example of how the council works in partnership in a business-like way to ensure our most vulnerable residents are looked after. Working jointly with AFC Wimbledon and the GLA, we secured funds for this amazing new day centre as part of the planning agreement for the new stadium at Plough Lane. Despite the pressure of huge cuts in funding from the government, we could put the needs of those who are most in need first, make sure they are provided for, and keep our services modern and up-to-date.

Through innovation and the hard work of our staff, we continue to provide valuable services and to help those who need our help most. For example, to help our young people who are in care, we have decided to exempt them from council tax when they reach 18 and begin their journey into independent living. And to ensure Merton is a great place for families, in the past year we have opened a new leisure centre in Morden and a new library in Colliers Wood.

Like all councils in London, this year Merton needs to make savings of millions of pounds. Like them, we are increasing the council tax, with much of the increase earmarked for providing social care, like that being offered at Leyton Road.

It isn’t easy making savings, or asking people to pay more, but talking to the users of our services at Leyton Road, I could see that, through business-like management of the council’s finances, Merton can continue to be London’s finest borough, a great place for families and for those we care most about.

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

Memorable year for Mayor of Merton

The Mayor of Merton works hard to shine a light on all the remarkable people and amazing things happening in the borough. This past year, Mayor of Merton, Cllr Mary Curtin has travelled the length and breadth of the borough to visit community and voluntary groups with a focus on older people and children, and recently opened the new day centre for adults with learning disabilities at Leyton Road. She has also welcomed people to the civic centre, invited residents for afternoon tea on Silver Sunday, and hosted several primary schools during Local Democracy Week.

From officiating weekly citizenship ceremonies where we welcome new citizens to Merton, to leading tributes on the centenary of the Armistice to those who lost their lives or were injured during the First World War, I want to thank the Mayor for all her hard work reaching out to the residents of our wonderful borough.
AFC Wimbledon have secured their return to Merton after completing a key stage for the development of their new stadium at Plough Lane. Merton Catalyst LLP (the joint venture of Galliard Homes and Catalyst Developments [Wimbledon] Ltd) officially transferred ownership of the land on which the stadium will be built to a subsidiary of the Dons Trust, The Wider Interests of Football Limited, meaning AFC Wimbledon began 2019 as owners of the freehold to that land.

Once completed, the new development will not only see AFC Wimbledon return to their rightful home, but will provide a state-of-the-art 11,000–20,000-seater football stadium, over 600 much needed homes, retail space, and a squash and fitness club as well as an economic boost to Merton.

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find out more
www.ploughlanestadium.co.uk

AFC Wimbledon’s new stadium is at the heart of the Plough Lane redevelopment.

Dementia Friends
Dementia Action Week takes place nationally from 20–26 May, and Merton Arts Space in Wimbledon Library and other venues across the borough will be hosting a series of films from around the world. Different Views of Dementia, organised by Film Merton and Merton’s Dementia Hub, will show how people are affected differently and how they find coping strategies. Films will include Marjorie Prime, Firefly Dreams, Robot and Frank, and more. The Alzheimer’s Society and Home Instead also run regular sessions at Colliers Wood Library, supporting those affected by Dementia.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/libraries

Merton backs local voluntary groups
Merton is a great place for families and a big part of the work Merton Council does is supporting the borough’s voluntary sector to provide extra services for everyone. In 2018/19, £9.9 million of funding was given to more than 150 local organisations, community groups, charities and projects. Since the previous year there has been an increase of just over £220,000 in the amount of funding being provided to the voluntary sector. While this may only be a small increase in percentage terms, it comes at a time of continued reductions in the level of funding that local government and other public sector bodies receive from central government.

Funding provided in 2018/19, helps to support and enable, amongst others, the running of the Polka and Attic Theatres, holiday and Saturday clubs for children with disabilities, supported living for people with learning disabilities, the Women’s Refuge, and advice and advocacy services.

Over £500,000 has been allocated to assist non-profit making bodies with discretionary rate relief on the properties they occupy.

find out more news.merton.gov.uk

Polka
Theatre’s doors closed until 2020
Family favourite Polka Theatre turns 40 this year and its birthday gift to Merton is a brand new building. This February, Polka’s doors temporarily closed to the public until summer 2020. The builders have now taken over to turn 40-year-old Polka into a state-of-the-art community resource for the future.

Before Christmas, Polka was awarded £1.2m investment from the Mayor of London’s Good Growth Fund along with funding from Arts Council England and Merton Council. Polka now have to raise the last £1 million of this £7.5m project and need your help! There are many ways you can support Polka to reach its funding target – sponsor part of the new building, become a Future Polka Family or simply donate at www.polkatheatre.com. Polka is a registered charity no. 256979.
**Official opening of Leisure Centre**

Residents in Merton are invited to the brand new Morden Leisure Centre’s community fun day on Saturday 30 March between 2pm until 6pm. The popular leisure centre for all the family will be officially opened by the Mayor of Merton, Councillor Mary Curtin during an afternoon packed with activities and events for all ages to enjoy.

Since Morden Leisure Centre first opened its doors on 6 November, families in Merton have been having a splashing time in the state-of-the-art facility. The brand new building, situated in the beautiful landscape of Morden Park, has a 25m x 13m main pool and slightly smaller second pool with a moveable floor. There is a studio/community room, a fully-equipped 100 station fitness suite, and a café with outside seating, which dog walkers who use the park are already making good use of. The leisure centre is fully accessible with a specialist Changing Places room which includes toilet, shower, changing bed and hoist, for those that need it.

The council has built the new centre to replace the ageing Morden Park Pool, which was energy-inefficient and expensive to maintain. The project was launched with two principles in mind; maximum benefit from limited budget and making sure that every stage of the development was informed by the needs of users and residents.

**Get your school to sign up to the Big Pedal now!**

Families across London are being invited to take up the Big Pedal 2019 – the UK’s largest cycling, walking and scooting challenge for schools.

This year’s competition is backed by Angellica Bell, the television, radio presenter and cycling advocate, who took on the Tour de Celeb in 2016 where she found her love for cycling.

Organised by the walking and cycling charity Sustrans, the competition will run from Monday 25 March to Friday 5 April and will encourage young people from across the UK to travel by bike, foot or scooter for their journey to and from school.

Walking and cycling can play a major role in improving air quality outside the school gates while helping to boost children’s activity levels. Ask your child’s school to sign up to Sustrans Big Pedal 2019.

**Haslemere Primary School going for gold**

A Merton school has become the first in the borough and the 12th school in the country to achieve a gold award in philosophy. Haslemere Primary School on the Phipps Bridge Estate in Mitcham has been rewarded for its new approach to learning and teaching, which has enhanced and changed the way its pupils think. Headteacher Charlotte Groom said: “P4C, or Philosophy for Children, is an approach to learning and teaching which enhances children’s thinking and communication skills, boosts their self-esteem, and improves their academic attainment. Our teachers really enjoy the sessions and the children say it is their favourite part of the week”. Amelia Foster, Chief Executive of SAPERE, presented the gold award to teachers and pupils on 10 December 2018.

**Children’s mental health**

Merton Council has been chosen to pilot a new approach to give children coming into the care system better mental health assessments. Merton is one of just nine local authorities and the only London borough selected to take part in the two-year pilot, which is funded by the Department for Education, and run by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families, along with a consortium of partners including Action for Children Research in Practice and the Child Outcomes Research Consortium. The pilot will conclude with an evaluation and the findings will be shared with other councils across the country.
Merton Council has paid tribute to Dame June Whitfield, the star of TV shows *Absolutely Fabulous* and *Terry and June*, for her contribution to the borough.
The legendary comic actress and long-term Wimbledon Village resident, who starred in TV and radio roles for more than five decades, passed away aged 93 in December.

Dame June became one of the best known faces of TV and worked with almost all the country’s top comedians, including Tony Hancock and Tommy Cooper. However, she will be equally remembered by many Merton residents for her high profile work in the community.

The actress frequently spoke of her love of Wimbledon, where she had lived since 1969 with her late husband, chartered surveyor Tim Aitchison, and actress daughter Suzy. Dame June was a great supporter of local charities, including The Merton Volunteers in Action and served as president of the League of Friends for St Helier and Sutton Hospitals. The actress was a huge fan of the New Wimbledon Theatre and was president of the venue’s Founder Friends group for more than 20 years. She was also a dedicated supporter of AFC Wimbledon and was an active president of the Wimbledon Supporters Club.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis, said: “Dame June was a proud long-term Merton resident who gave so much to our borough. In addition to being an absolutely fabulous actor, she was heavily involved in the community life of Merton. She was a wonderful ambassador for the area and a great supporter of so many local causes.”

“We are particularly delighted that she opened the Link building at the civic centre in 2002, where there is a plaque marking the occasion and honouring one of the country’s most admired actors.”

June Whitfield was awarded the DBE in the 2017 Queen’s Birthday Honours for services to drama and entertainment.

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**WIN A FAMILY TICKET FOR THE WIMBLEDON LAWN TENNIS MUSEUM & TOUR**

The Wimbledon Foundation, the charity of The All England Lawn Tennis Club makes a valuable contribution to meeting social needs and reducing inequalities in Merton and Wandsworth by awarding grants totalling over £400,000 a year to charities and community organisations.

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

Which Show Court will feature a new roof at this year’s Championships?
A) CENTRE COURT     B) No.1 COURT     C) COURT 18

Visit merton.gov.uk/mymerton to enter.

The closing date for entries is 30 April 2019.

wimbledon.com/foundation

Terms and conditions: The competition is to win one family ticket (two adults and two children) to visit the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum and Tour, Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AE. The Museum is open daily except 17-19 May 2019, 24-26 December 2019 and 1 January 2020. Tours do not run between 17 June and 20 July 2019. For the tour schedule, visit wimbledon.com/museum. The prize cannot be exchanged or used in conjunction with any other offer. There are no cash alternatives, accommodation or travel included in this prize.
Merton scores an ace at New Year’s Day Parade

Merton is celebrating another successful year at London’s New Year’s Day Parade after winning £5,000 for the Mayor’s charities with its entry, Merton Welcomes the World. Two giant puppet tennis players, controlled by talented pupils from the Wimbledon College of Art, showed off their tennis skills. Councillors, young people from Morden Little League and friends danced and sang to the parade song, ‘Anyone for Tennis’, which was composed by Councillor Linda Kirby and recorded by children from Links Primary School. The Mayor of Merton, Councillor Mary Curtin thanked everyone involved, with a special appreciation for the students at Wimbledon College of Art and Deputy Mayor, Councillor Geraldine Stanford for organising the Merton entry.

Get tuned in

Tuned In is a free, weekly drop in session at Merton Arts Space in Wimbledon Library. It gives participants the opportunity to play music with others under the guidance of acclaimed musician Jah Wobble.

Speaking at the launch on 28 January, Jah Wobble said: “Tuned In is a fantastic initiative that brings everyone together under a shared love of music. Music touches lives and we are creating a place for local people to get together and be creative.” Tuned In takes place every Monday from 7–9pm and is for people of all levels of musical ability. Instruments are provided and you are welcome to bring your own equipment too.

Neighbourhoods to receive £15k of community funding

Every electoral ward in Merton is to be given a grant of £15k for neighbourhood projects which enhance the local area. Merton Council will open applications in the spring, when communities will be able to select from a range of projects that can be funded by the £15k for their wards. These may include bulb planting, seating, painting of park fences and lampposts.

Applicants need to put forward their selections to their ward councillors, who must all agree to the proposals before submitting them to the council for approval. In addition, communities can submit bids to a separate fund called the Neighbourhood Fund. This fund is available for a broader range of projects that Merton Council and communities have decided would address their priorities for Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

The funding for both the £15k per ward allocation and the Neighbourhood Fund projects comes from the Community Infrastructure Levy – money developers are required to pay as part of planning consent to support the demands their plans place on the local area. Each ward will have three years to spend their £15k allocation.

Mental Health Awareness Week

Libraries offer spaces to learn, meet, socialise, get active and be creative, all making a positive impact on residents’ lives. Monday 13 to Sunday 19 May is the UK’s national week to raise awareness of mental health. This year’s official theme is body image, and the link between how we see ourselves and how that makes us feel. Merton Libraries will be taking part by hosting events, talks and displaying relevant reading materials in its libraries. Look out for further announcements and keep connected on the Merton Libraries Twitter, Facebook and events pages.
Family fun at Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum

This Easter, come and enjoy a family day out at a world-famous sporting venue right on your doorstep! At Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, discover the history and magic of Wimbledon with fun activities for children of all ages. The Museum’s new Tennis Time Travellers backpacks are filled with fun facts, stories and sensory objects the whole family can enjoy together. Visitors can also test their skills on the reaction wall and visit the historic Centre Court. Enjoy our family offer (one free child for each full paying adult).

find out more
www.wimbledon.com

Tree of the year winners revealed

A stunning red oak in Merton Park Primary School’s playground and a London Plane, growing in the garden of Glebelands on Love Lane, Mitcham, have both been crowned Merton’s favourite trees. The competition aims to celebrate Merton’s favourite trees by encouraging residents to get out in the borough and enjoy its beautiful green and urban spaces. Merton Park resident Terry Barr and Mitcham resident John Davis nominated the winning trees and were given the opportunity to get green-fingered and plant a new tree in their local area. Merton’s favourite tree competition is organised by Merton Council and Merton Tree Wardens group and the deadline for entries is 30 September each year.

find out more
merton.gov.uk and search favourite tree competition.

Dignity Action Day

Residents of Kelstone Court Care Home in Morden were treated to a celebratory afternoon tea event on Friday 1 February to mark the Dignity Action Day (DAD) celebrations. DAD is a national annual event to recognise those living in care and afford them the dignity and respect they deserve. Attending the event were the Mayor of Merton, Cllr Mary Curtin and Leader of the Council, Cllr Stephen Alambritis. On Dignity Action Day, members of the community are encouraged to visit anyone they know who is living in care to try and make their day special. Kelstone Court is just one example of quality 24 hour care in Merton with specialist residential and nursing care for older people. The afternoon tea was organised in partnership with Merton Seniors Forum.

Turn to page 25 to find out what’s on in the borough this spring
Working life: Providing a lifeline to people in need

Supporting vulnerable people in the borough is a key priority for the council. *My Merton* caught up with Jacky Greenfield, from the council’s Client Affairs Team, to find out how her team helps and protects their customers from those who prey on vulnerable people.

Jacky Greenfield leads the council’s Client Affairs Team. This busy, four-person unit supports vulnerable people who lack the mental capacity to manage their own financial affairs. With around 200 clients, ranging in age from 18 to 106, the team provides a lifeline to people who may otherwise find themselves homeless or the victims of financial abuse.

For Jacky, a highpoint of the role is being able to help this diverse group of people:

“As a team we strive to do our best for our clients and support them – we care about them and try to protect them from unscrupulous individuals who prey on vulnerable people.

“The best thing about the job is being able to make a positive impact on people’s lives, particularly those who have been subject to financial abuse before coming to us, which is often the case.

“We build relationships with our clients as they often pop in to see us, and many phone us on a regular basis; if they have problems, we’re their first port of call.

“A number of clients consider us part of the family – in some cases their only family.

“We sort out their bills, make sure they have adequate spending money and try to ensure that it’s being used sensibly. Clients are often referred to us as they are in debt and unable to pay their bills. Further investigations will occasionally uncover financial abuse.

“Sometimes we have to sell clients’ homes and, on occasion, we have even helped to buy new ones! We often have to arrange funerals – for our clients, if they have no family, and public health funerals for people who die in the borough and for whom no other arrangements are made.”

Jacky has worked in the team for more than eight years, during which time she’s seen her workload grow as cases become more complex.

“There are a lot of people with learning difficulties and mental health problems living to an older age due to advances in medicine. Cases of dementia are on the rise, leaving residents more vulnerable than ever before. A growing number of people are socially isolated too, which causes difficulties for them due to their lack of good support networks. Sadly these residents are at risk of neglect or of being exploited.”

Having seen the difficulties that can arise once people lack capacity, Jacky’s message to residents is to plan for the future: “Nobody knows if they’re going to lose capacity. With the rise in dementia, people need to be prepared and think about appointing an attorney. Power of attorney is relatively simple and inexpensive to do nowadays.”

**Find out more**

If you’re worried that a vulnerable person might be the victim of abuse, contact Merton’s Safeguarding Adults hotline on 0845 618 9762.
Living in Merton we’re lucky to be surrounded by green space in the form of parks, gardens and commons. However, like most London boroughs, there are still significant pollution blackspots. While the council’s options for making a direct impact on vehicle pollution levels are limited, we are taking every step possible. Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Councillor Tobin Byers, explained: “We have already introduced walking and cycling initiatives, car clubs, electric charging points and a levy on diesel cars to help keep the most polluting vehicles off our road. However, it is clear that we need to do more to reduce harmful emissions by discouraging drivers from using their cars in the borough.”

My Merton takes a look at the vital role parking charges could play in tackling air pollution and its impact on public health. Encouraging more people to leave their cars at home and increase the number of journeys they make on foot, by bike and public transport is just one way we are planning to improve air quality and cut congestion in the borough.

The council is proposing a new charging system for on-street parking, car parks and residents’ permits. These revised parking charges will be set according to access to public transport, air quality, congestion and hours of enforcement – to discourage car use, all charges, which have remained largely unchanged for around ten years, will be increased, and drivers will pay more to park in areas where there are good public transport links.

Visit the council’s website to find out more about the proposed new charging system, the draft traffic management orders and how the proposed charges for on-street parking, car parks and residents’ permits may affect you. For example, will the cost of your resident permit or car park season ticket change?

Have your say
We would like to hear what you think about the proposed new charges for parking. The consultation runs until 5 May 2019 and can be found at merton.gov.uk/parkingconsultation2019

巧合: find out more
merton.gov.uk/parkingconsultation2019
How we reviewed parking charges

Four key factors were considered when the new set of proposed parking charges were developed:

Air quality The whole borough is designated an air quality management area, which means more must be done to reduce levels of small particles and nitrogen dioxide. Nearly two thirds of this pollutant is emitted from vehicles, which are either travelling within the borough or passing through it, with the highest levels in our town centres and on main roads.

Traffic that passes through the borough is harder to stop; this is why Merton’s Air Quality plan sets out in detail what actions the council is continuing to take to tackle this problem. A copy of the plan can be read on the parking consultation webpage.

To help reduce reliance on petrol vehicles, Merton’s ambition is to create 125 electric vehicle charge points across the borough by 2022, including fast charging points, with many in residential areas. We continue to support electric car clubs for people who only need a car occasionally and we have reduced the cost of residents’ permits to £20 a year for electric vehicles. We also took the difficult decision of introducing a levy on resident permits for diesel vehicles in 2017 to encourage drivers to switch to less harmful transport.

Public transport links Merton is the only London borough to have trains, two Underground lines, trams and buses. This means people living, working in and visiting these areas could use more sustainable modes of transport for their journey and leave their car at home. This is why we are proposing that parking in well-connected areas will cost more than in places with fewer transport links.

Congestion hotspots Each street and car park in the borough has been reviewed to see how congested and busy they are. We looked at long-stay parking spaces for commuters and short-stay parking for drivers shopping in our town centres and high streets. The higher the demand for parking in an area, the greater the number of cars there are ‘cruising’ the streets looking for spaces. This has a big effect on congestion and, subsequently, air quality. Limiting the time that a vehicle can park in a bay and increasing the charge for parking in congested places can help to manage the circulation of vehicles in the borough’s busiest areas.

The council believe that the proposed new charging structure is at a level that will not deter people from visiting the borough, but will encourage them to leave their car at home and consider walking, cycling or taking public transport.

Enforcement Controlled Parking Zone charging will be based on two factors, location to public transport links and the length of time a zone is enforced throughout the day.

Next steps Further information about the proposed new charging structure for parking and statutory consultation are available to view and complete on the council’s website. A statutory notice will be published in a local newspaper and notices put up in all council owned car parks.

All responses to the consultation will be considered and a report containing the results will be discussed at Cabinet on 3 June 2019. If agreed, the new charging system will be in place in late June 2019 and statutory notices will be displayed in all council owned car parks. Full details will be available on the parking consultation webpage.

Proposed charging structure for on-street parking

The proposed charges for cars parked on a street in the borough is based on the four key factors of air quality, public transport links, congestion hotspots and enforcement. To identify areas easily, the borough has been split into four zones:

Zone 1 Wimbledon Town Centre main shopping area, Broadway and Wimbledon Bridge and Wimbledon Hill area.
Zone 2 Wimbledon Village, Wimbledon Park, South Wimbledon, Raynes Park and Colliers Wood.
Zone 3 Mitcham and Morden.
Zone 4 An area just away from the shops in Wimbledon Village on the Wimbledon Common side will have a reduced rate to encourage motorists to park away from the busy High Street.

Proposed charges and further information about the new zones can be found on our parking consultation webpage.

find out more For more information about how we are tackling air pollution in the borough and the proposed new parking charges structure, visit merton.gov.uk/parkingconsultation2019
Could you be a foster carer?

If you have time and patience, are over 18 years old and have a spare room, why not help a local teenager and consider becoming a foster carer?

Even though the council successfully attracted a record number of new foster carers in 2018, there is still a shortage of carers for teenagers, sibling groups and unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the borough.

Foster carer Jane Thomas said: “There is a common misconception that young people come into foster care because of their behaviour, but the reality is that more often it is because of difficult circumstances at home. By offering a child a foster home, you will be helping them to fulfil their potential at a critical stage in their life.”

Anyone can apply to foster, whatever your background, marital status or sexual orientation. You do not have to have had children of your own, however a spare bedroom and some childcare experience is desirable. You will receive comprehensive support, which includes a generous allowance of up to £514 per week, per child, as well as additional grants.

Find out more
Call: 020 8545 4070 or 0800 073 0874
Email: fostering@merton.gov.uk. Visit: merton.gov.uk/fostering
Follow us on Facebook: Merton Fostering and Adoption Network

COMPETITION

Win two tickets to Club Tropicana at New Wimbledon Theatre

Take a trip back to the electric 80s and embark on a summer of love and smash-hit classics! Welcome to the Club Tropicana Hotel where the drinks are free and the whole family is invited to join the ultimate holiday musical, celebrating all that we love about the 80s. Set to iconic pop anthems and performed live on stage, songs include Just Can’t Get Enough, Take On Me, The Look Of Love, Girls Just Wana Have Fun, Relax and many more! Starring Joe McElderry, X Factor winner and star of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

Visit merton.gov.uk/mymerton to enter and answer the following question.

Which band sang the hit song Club Tropicana?

a) Bon Jovi
b) The Human League
c) Wham!

Closing date for entries: Wednesday 3 April 2019.

Terms and conditions:
The tickets are non-transferable. There are no cash alternatives, accommodation or travel included in the prize. The competition is for two tickets to see Club Tropicana at New Wimbledon Theatre, valid Tuesday 23 to Saturday 27 April 2019.
New day centre gets the thumbs up

With its comfortable sofas, modern computer suite and amazing sensory room, Merton’s new day centre on Leyton Road, Colliers Wood, has quickly become a home-from-home for the people who use it. My Merton takes a tour of the new facility.

Each day the new Leyton Road Community Resource Centre welcomes 40 adults with learning disabilities who come along to meet friends, enjoy art and music and learn valuable skills – cooking themselves a lunchtime snack in the new training kitchen, for example.

The people attending range in age from their 20s to 70s. For each of them, it is a chance to get out and about. And, as many are looked after by elderly parents, their time at the day centre is a vital break for their carers too.

The centre opened in November, following a move from the group’s previous home at High Path, which will become part of new secondary school, Harris Wimbledon’s permanent home. The new location is close to Colliers Wood Underground station, bringing all the advantages of nearby transport links, shops and cafes. The centre had its official launch on 30 January.

The council consulted users about the design of the building and its colour schemes, but after 20 years based at High Path, some regulars were understandably reticent about the move. Now, with all the rooms in use and the activities up and running, the day centre has received a universal thumbs up.

The well-equipped computer room, in particular, has proved popular with users, enabling people to do more with technology. Meanwhile the sensory room, with its lava lamps and music, is a relaxing space, which is also used by local therapists.

There is an art room and a garden room too; opening onto a pleasant patio for outdoor activities and barbecues. But the main change is the open-plan feel of the space with a central, sofa-filled hub, where visitors can stop for a chat and a cup of tea.

Other local groups including the Uptown Youth Club, Mencap and the West Indian Friends and Family Association meet in the building after hours, and it’s used for Merton Adult Education classes too, benefitting the whole community.
feature

Enforcement in action

Criminals and rogue traders – we are watching you

Merton Council has pledged to use its enforcement powers to the full, to protect residents from the criminals and rogue traders who put public safety in jeopardy. My Merton finds out more.

Flytipping

We know you care about where you live and want it kept clean and tidy. This is why we spend £5m a year clearing rubbish from our streets and parks and fining people who flytip and dump rubbish. This is money that could be used for vital services like social care for our most vulnerable residents, for example. This is why we are using tip-offs from the public and hidden cameras to aid the council’s environmental enforcement team to identify those responsible for illegally dumping rubbish. Examples include covert operations, which led to the prosecution of 19 people last year for dumping waste by the roadside, and the seizure of several vehicles involved in flytipping. The vehicles, which were not roadworthy, were crushed and the owners face prosecution. As part of a zero tolerance approach to flytipping, the council can also issue £400 fines for smaller-scale offences, such as waste dumped beside litter bins.

Report flytips at merton.gov.uk/litter or call 020 8274 4901.

Food safety

In November, the food store Iceland was fined a total of £430,000 for food hygiene offences in two of its Merton stores. The prosecution followed visits to the Mitcham and Morden branches by environmental health officers, who had received complaints from residents. Mouse droppings were found, along with evidence that food packets had been gnawed by rodents. Advice about pest control and deep cleaning was given, but follow-up visits revealed continuing poor standards of hygiene.

A month later, the Wimbledon Broadway branch of KFC was closed to the public by a court order, after rat droppings were found in the kitchen to such an extent that the fast food restaurant was seen as posing a serious danger to health. The branch had previously been given the highest food hygiene rating possible. KFC worked closely with the council to rectify problems and the restaurant has reopened. Both cases were brought to court by Merton’s environmental health team.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

Working closely with partner organisations, including the police, the council uses CCTV to monitor crime and anti-social behaviour. We have 223 static cameras and a number of mobile cameras, operational 24/7. If our CCTV operators witness a crime, they call the police direct and their footage is used to support investigations. Among many daily examples, where CCTV has aided the police, are the arrest of a suspected house burglar; the prevention of a robbery in a shop; the identification of people dealing drugs and the apprehension of a man with a handgun. The council’s CCTV team also works with environmental enforcement officers on flytipping operations.

Dumping rubbish bags next to litter bins could cost you £400

Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough • Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough • Merton – proud to be a Fairtrade borough
Merton's heritage service celebrates 25 years

From Roman road builders and Anglo-Saxon settlers, to punk pioneers, the borough has a history as rich as it is diverse. Merton’s Heritage Centre has been at its heart for 25 years. My Merton learns more about the planned anniversary celebrations and some fascinating facts about the borough.

The aim of setting up the Heritage Centre was to raise awareness of local history, encouraging people from all backgrounds to take a pride in their area. Opened in April 1994 at The Canons, a 17th century house in Mitcham, the Centre began telling the story of Merton and its people. In 2008 it merged with the Local Studies service and relocated to Morden Library.

The Heritage Centre has held 200 exhibitions – covering diverse topics from wartime Merton and women’s suffrage, to local ghost stories and the paranormal. The service has also offered a popular series of local history talks, created resources for Merton schools and helped people tracing their family trees.

Discover Merton’s heritage
Events to celebrate the jubilee include a Heritage Discovery Day at Morden Library on 11 May, 12.30–4.30pm, featuring film screenings, talks, displays, children’s craft activities and heritage stalls. Also planned are lunchtime learning sessions, history skills workshops, storytelling and author events, plus a heritage craft fair. Residents will also be invited to display their photos and artwork to create a grand Merton montage.

Five things you may not know about Merton...
- Woolly mammoths roamed prehistoric Merton – fragments of bone and teeth were found by the River Wandle.
- A tunnel under Merton High Street, wide enough for a coach and horses, allowed Admiral Lord Nelson and members of his household to travel from one side of his Merton Place estate to the other in privacy.
- The hearing condition tinnitus was discovered by Wimbledon’s Joseph Toynbee, a Victorian ear, nose and throat specialist, who lived at 49 Parkside.
- Life Savers, the original version of the Polo Mint were created at Pascall’s Mitcham confectionery factory in 1916.
- Merton’s musical alumni include 60s’ folk singer Sandy Denny, Mick Jones of The Clash, guitarist Porl Thompson of The Cure and R&B producer Sampha.

On a larger scale, projects such as Merton Memories have digitised 15,000 historic photos, whilst Carved in Stone has raised awareness of the borough’s First World War history. This important work has been achieved thanks to 80 local volunteers who have supported the service over the years.

For more information on the Heritage Centre’s anniversary celebrations call 020 8545 3239 or email local.studies@merton.gov.uk
Delivering value for money services

Spring is when Merton Council sets its budget for the coming year, agreeing savings, deciding how much we can spend on each service and setting the level of council tax residents will pay. *My Merton* looks at this year’s budget.

**Your council tax**

With government grants having fallen again, this year Merton’s councillors have identified budget savings of around £10m in order to balance the budget. Council tax, which raises £92m a year for the council, will also need to rise by 4.99% from April. This represents around £1.12 a week for a band D property. Of this rise, 2% is for the ‘precept’ proposed by the government to be exclusively used for adult social care.

Putting up council tax is always a difficult decision but, with money increasingly tight, a small increase in council tax is a necessary step to minimise cuts to the services we value the most.

Even after these decisions, the council will need to find further savings of around £7m over the next three years. However, given that money is tight, we have pledged to continue to use your money wisely, taking an efficient and organised approach to finances in all our areas of work.

**Cllr Mark Allison, Cabinet Member for Finance, explained:**

“We have managed the pressure on our finances by taking a business-like approach, working in partnership with other boroughs and organisations and finding innovative ways to do the same thing more cheaply. Although unfortunately cuts to our funding on this scale are bound to have an impact, our approach has helped us keep cuts to a minimum to services for those who rely on us most; older and disabled people and vulnerable children.”
New spending decisions for 2019

Young people leaving care will be exempt from paying council tax until they are 25. The move is part of a suite of measures in the budget to support care leavers on their journey to independence.

The council is also working with the borough’s voluntary groups to ensure that grants, which are being maintained at current levels, are allocated fairly and that they provide good value.

For instance, with adult social care our area of greatest spend, we are trying to ensure these services are both efficient and relevant to people’s lives. However, while it is clear that isolation among elderly people is a real issue, few older people want to attend a day centre. So, we are capitalising on our ever-popular lunch clubs, which are a better way of enabling people to live healthy, independent lives within their communities.

How we keep cuts to a minimum

The new, family-friendly, state-of-the-art Morden Leisure Centre has been open to the public since last autumn. But the opening is not only good news for residents. The project has replaced the ageing and expensive to operate Morden Park Pool. Even at a time of financial constraint, the building work could go ahead thanks to some astute financial planning by the council, including saving up the money needed in a special ‘reserve’ account.

Similarly, in spite of pressure on budgets, we have managed to keep all the borough’s libraries fully open, when others around the country are closing. Our innovative library volunteer programme, launched in 2010, has won awards and allowed us to maintain opening hours, while collaborating with a housing developer has enabled us to completely rebuild Colliers Wood Library.

The need for innovative and efficient ways to deliver essential services is the reason for our new waste and recycling contract with Veolia. By sharing a contract with three other boroughs, the contract is saving Merton £1.6 million a year. The new service has led to a surge in recycling rates and street litter caused by black bags splitting open is falling. But with the nation-wide increase in flytipping, we’re having to spend some of the savings clearing these illegal dumps and trying to find and prosecute perpetrators – which we know is a priority for you. This is money we’d much rather spend on vital services.
Vestry Hall open day
Free admission
336 London Road CR4 3UD

- Room hire
- Function halls
- Office rental
- Storage hire
- Virtual office

APRIL 5
1–4pm

Merton Council

Stay tuned

Merton Council

merton.gov.uk
EU nationals reminded to apply for settled status

As Brexit draws closer, Merton Council is urging EU citizens living in the borough to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. The scheme will enable EU citizens, and their families, to continue to live in the UK after 30 June 2021. My Merton takes a closer look.

Merton is a diverse and inclusive borough and the council is keen to stress that EU citizens are very welcome here, regardless of the outcome of Brexit. But if you are an EU citizen, it’s important to understand the process of applying for settled status and of getting your application in on time.

If you are an EU citizen, you need to apply, even if you have been living in the UK for many years. This includes people who were born in the UK, but are not British citizens. It also includes EU nationals who are married to British citizens but who don’t have British citizenship in their own right.

If you don’t apply by the deadline, you could lose your right to live and work in the UK and to use the NHS and access benefits and pensions.

In January, the Prime Minister cancelled the £65 fee to apply for settled status, so no one should be put off applying because of cost. If you have already applied and paid a fee, you can claim a refund.

The scheme officially opens on 30 March 2019 and you have until 30 June 2021 to submit your application. This is assuming Britain leaves the EU with a deal, which was still uncertain at the time of writing. If no deal is reached, the deadline will be 31 December 2020.

To apply, you will need to provide proof of identity in the form of a valid passport or national identity card and proof of continuous residence, this could be your National Insurance number to allow an automated check based on tax and benefit records. 

**find out more** For more information about the scheme, and to sign up for text alerts visit gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families
Six top tips for an eco-Easter

Consumers in the UK eat more chocolate per head than anywhere else in the world, with Easter high season for indulging our national sweet tooth. Around 90 million Easter eggs will be consumed this year – but did you know that a quarter of the weight of many popular eggs is made up of packaging?

Manufacturers have responded to concerns about excess Easter packaging excess and, with the exception of some plastic windows and chocolate bar wrappers, much of this waste is recyclable. So, after you’ve polished off your eggs, please make sure you recycle the wrapping in the correct way. Card goes in your paper and card wheelie bin with the blue lid (or communal recycling bin for flats) and foil goes in your green box (or communal recycling bin for flats). Some moulded plastic (that protects the egg in the box) can be recycled in your green box or communal recycling bin too – check for the widely recycled symbol on the packaging.

You can also help the planet this Easter by following our six top tips:

• Choose chocolate eggs with minimal packaging that’s also recyclable. Eggs and bunnies just wrapped in foil are perfect. Or you could make your own by melting chocolate into a reusable mould.
• Recycle Easter cards in your paper and card wheelie bin. Better still, consider an e-card or homemade version crafted from reused materials.
• If your children are decorating eggs or bonnets, avoid buying plastic eggs or craft materials. Decorate boiled or blown eggs using paper, card or other reusable scraps.
• If you’re entertaining family and friends over Easter plan meals in advance and take a list out shopping to avoid the temptation to buy too much food.
• Find creative ideas for leftovers at lovefoodhatewaste.com. In the unlikely event that you have too many chocolate eggs, use them in baking or to make a drink. Hot cross buns can be turned into a delicious bread and butter pudding with an Easter twist.
• Recycle your peelings and plate scrapings in your food waste bin. If you don’t have one, join the scheme at merton.gov.uk/recycling or call 020 8274 4902.

Your personal recycling and rubbish collections calendar

Six months ago, we introduced a new recycling and rubbish collection service for homes across the borough.

Three quarters of the borough now have a new collection day and there are alternate collections of paper and card, non-recyclable rubbish and food waste one week; then plastics, cans, cartons and glass, plus food waste, the following week.

To help you to keep track of what recycling and rubbish to put out each week, download your personalised collection calendar. Simply visit merton.gov.uk/collectiondays and type in your postcode. At the moment, this information isn’t available for collections from flats.

Go online and you can also find out exactly what can and can’t be disposed of in each type of bin. Remember, we now collect bagged textiles and used household batteries each week too.

Alternatively, call us on 020 8274 4902 to find out more.
The journey of an Easter egg box

When you’re finished with your Easter egg’s cardboard box, place it in the wheelie bin with the blue lid (or communal recycling bin for larger flats). It then begins a journey that will see it transformed into a fresh piece of card, ready to reappear as a cereal box, envelope or even one of next year’s Easter egg boxes.

Once your bin has been emptied into the recycling vehicle on collection day:

All the card collected is sorted into bales and transported to a recycling plant.

The card is shredded and mixed with water (to make a pulp).

Once dry, the result is a large sheet of card.

The pulp goes through a decontamination process to remove unwanted items such as glue and ink.

Water is removed from the pulp by pressing it through large rollers.

As well as diverting a lot of waste from landfill, making card from recycled material is better for the environment because it uses fewer resources than creating new card.

Please note: there will be no changes to recycling and rubbish collections over the Easter and May bank holidays.
Get healthy this spring

As the weather gets warmer and the days longer, spring is the perfect time to improve your health and wellbeing. My Merton finds out about the free help available for everyone in and around the borough.

Make a spring sugar swap

According to the health campaign Change4Life, children in England are eating around eight more cubes of sugar a day than is recommended. Some of this sugar is found in fizzy drinks, sweets and cakes, but the rest is hidden in less obvious places like breakfast cereals and yoghurts.

This spring, Change4Life is asking people to make simple swaps to reduce the sugar in their family’s diet. For example, swapping a chocolate-flavoured cereal for a wholewheat one topped with banana. Visit change4life.co.uk for more ideas. For a fascinating insight into just how much sugar is in everyday products, download the Sugar Smart app. Use it to scan barcodes to see the sugar, fat and salt levels in hundreds of your favourite foods.

Sexual health advice

Merton residents can now get confidential treatment and advice from a new sexual health clinic based at 160 Falcon Road, near Clapham Junction. The clinic offers testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and contraceptive advice and coil fitting. There’s also a gay men’s clinic and a young people’s clinic.

Treatment and advice are available from the borough’s other sexual health services too – the Patrick Doody clinic in Wimbledon and the Wide Way Medical Centre, Mitcham. People without symptoms can order a free STI testing kit, which will be delivered to your door. If you have symptoms, please book an appointment at one of the clinics. For full details of all these services visit shswl.nhs.uk or call 0333 300 2100.

Are your child’s jabs up to date?

Some children in Merton are missing out on their childhood vaccinations including MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and pre-school booster vaccinations. Merton mother Sarah Shenow is calling for parents of children aged under five to get up to date with their child’s vaccinations and protect their children against infections. Sarah said: “It is vital to ensure children are vaccinated on time as these infectious diseases are very serious. A close friend of mine lost her three-year-old son, two days before Christmas to an illness that could have been prevented with a vaccine. It is so easy to speak to your GP and get up to date with the vaccinations. My two-year-old son Emmanuel was fine with them all.”

If you think your child has missed their MMR jab or booster, contact your GP or health visitor now. Read more at www.nhs.uk/vaccinations

Pop-up film to shine light on dementia

Merton is hosting a ground-breaking pop-up film festival in May, which aims to challenge media stereotypes of people with dementia. The screenings will take place during Dementia Action Week (20–26 May 2019) at venues across the borough. Organised by Merton’s Dementia Action Alliance, the selected films will shine a light on the people affected by dementia, rather than the disease, looking at their individual experiences and ways of coping. Email: merton@alzheimers.org.uk to find out more or call Merton Dementia Hub on 020 8687 0922. The festival is part of Film Merton, the borough’s year-long celebration of film.
Stand up to hate crime

Brexit has dominated the political landscape for two years. But perhaps the darkest legacy of Britain’s vote to leave the EU has been a national rise in hate crime.

The referendum in 2016 saw a spike in verbal and physical assaults on European nationals living in the UK, and other groups perceived as being foreigners. Strongly-worded rhetoric and the impact of social media have all been blamed for creating a climate which normalises hate crime. With the political turmoil in the lead up to our departure from the EU, police across the UK have been on the alert for further incidents.

Please report any attacks or intimidation driven by prejudice against you, your friends or neighbours – whether because of country of origin, race, religion, sexuality, gender identity or disability – to the police or to our partner agencies. The police will take all reports seriously and will offer support, while pursuing positive outcomes wherever possible.

If you’ve been a victim of hate crime, or have witnessed a hate crime, contact the police on 101 or, for an immediate response, ring 999. You can also contact Merton Victim Support on 020 7801 1777.

Advice is available from a new drop in session in conjunction with the charity Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks) on the second Tuesday of the month, 1pm to 2pm, at the civic centre.

In Merton, which has seen increases in reported hate crime, the message is that everyone is welcome in our borough and that no one should suffer in silence.

Join the Fire Cadets

Did you know the London Fire Brigade has its very own Fire Cadets in Merton? Fire Cadets is a national organisation and can be found in 18 London boroughs. Merton Fire Cadets is made up of 16 young people who either live or go to school in the borough and are aged between 14 and 17. So far, the Cadets have been learning, developing and practicing basic fire and rescue skills, taking part in social actions in the local community, and beginning to complete their BTEC Level 2 Award in Fire and Rescue Services. The Cadets are gaining key life skills in leadership and communication, developing their confidence, learning how to work as a team, making new friends and having fun. Funded by Safer Merton, Merton Fire Cadets meet every Wednesday during term time at Mitcham Fire Station, 6–9pm.

Look out for your neighbours

Merton Neighbourhood Watch is a community-run scheme, supported by the police. It brings people together to create friendly and active communities where crime and anti-social behaviour are less likely to happen.

Here to help

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

Love shouldn’t hurt

If you are in an abusive relationship speak out, we can help.

Cllr Edith Macauley, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities meets the Merton Fire Cadets
Merton Council urgently needs foster carers for teenagers, siblings and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Foster for Merton and we can offer you:

- On-going comprehensive training
- 24 hour support, 365 days per year
- An allowance of up to £514 per week, per child

Come along to one of our Information Events at Morden Baptist Church on:

- 3 April at 10.30am
- 24 April at 6.00pm
- 8 May at 10.30am
- 22 May at 6.00pm
- 5 June at 10.30am

Call us today on 0800 073 0874 / 020 8545 4070
or visit merton.gov.uk/fostering
or email fostering@merton.gov.uk
for more details
**Arts and entertainment**

- **A Bunch of Amateurs**  
  *Wednesday 3 April–Saturday 6 April*  
  Lantern Arts Centre, Tolverne Road, Raynes Park. The tale of a fading Hollywood action hero, who unwittingly takes a role in an amateur production, brings plenty of comedy moments in this play. In a bid to revive his career, Jefferson Steele arrives in Stratford to play King Lear, only to find the location is actually a sleepy village and the cast are amateurs trying to save their theatre from developers. Tickets £14; concessions £12.
  - [find out more](www.lanternarts.org/a-bunch-of-amateurs)

- **West Barnes Singers Springtime Concert**  
  *Saturday 6 April from 7.30pm*  
  St Paul’s Church, Augustus Road, Wimbledon. Mozart Requiem with professional soloists and orchestra. Tickets cost £15.
  - [find out more](westbarnessingers.co.uk)

- **The Spirit of Venice**  
  *Saturday 6 April from 7.30pm*  
  Renaissance music concert by Wimbledon Chamber Choir, accompanied by cornets, sackbuts and theorbo at St Matthew’s Church, Durham Road, Raynes Park. Tickets £12; £9 concessions.
  - [find out more](www.wimbledonchamberchoir.org.uk)

- **Macmillan Merton Quiz Night**  
  *Friday 5 April from 7.30pm*  
  Return of the hugely popular charity event at St Mary’s Garden Hall, Arthur Road, Wimbledon. Groups and individuals of all ages are welcome. Early booking is recommended. Tickets, which include supper, cost £25 each.
  - [find out more](email marionlgodwin@gmail.com)

- **Lineker & Baker: Behind Closed Doors**  
  *Sunday 7 April, 8pm*  
  Gary Lineker and Danny Baker are to lead this romp through the ‘beautiful game’ and share their intimate knowledge of life in and around English football. This show will tell dressing room tales and green room stories from Gary and Danny’s time in football and broadcasting.

- **Matthew Bourne’s Swan Lake touring show**  
  *Tuesday 16–Saturday 20 April, 7.30pm; Thursday and Saturday matinees, 2.30pm*  
  Magical and ground-breaking modern re-interpretation of Swan Lake which has taken the dance world by storm. The iconic show by Matthew Bourne is famed for replacing the traditional female corps de ballet with a menacing male ensemble. The multi award-winning show blends dance and humour and features spectacular award-winning designs by Lez Brotherston.

- **Horrible Histories: Awful Egyptians; Terrible Tudors**  
  *Wednesday 26–Saturday 29 June, various performances*  
  Two amazing shows bringing historical figures and events back to life by actors and ground-breaking 3D special effects. Discover the fascinating Pharaohs, the power of the pyramids and the foul facts of death and decay with the meanest mummies in Egypt. Or meet the Tudors and find out more about the fate of Henry’s headless wives, his punch up with the Pope and see the Spanish Armada sail into the audience.

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**New Wimbledon Theatre**

- **Location**: 93 The Broadway, Wimbledon, SW19 1QG  
- **Book online**: [www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon](http://www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon)  
- **Telephone booking**: 0844 871 7696  
- **Access bookings**: 0844 871 7677 (no booking fees apply)

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- **A Quizzical Evening**  
  *What’s on in your area?*  
  [merton.gov.uk/events](http://merton.gov.uk/events)
**Libraries**
Here’s a selection of what’s on in Merton’s libraries:

- **Free British Red Cross first aid sessions**
  Gain a certificate in first aid with the British Red Cross charity. Free sessions are taking place across several libraries in March and April.
  - **Thursday 21 March from 11am-1pm**
    Wimbledon Library.
    Book in person or call 020 8274 5757.
  - **Tuesday 26 March from 1-3pm**
    Colliers Wood Library.
    Book in person or call 020 8274 5799.
  - **Saturday 29 March from 1-3pm**
    Raynes Park Library.
    Book in person or call 020 8274 5718.
  - **Friday 12 April from 1-3pm**
    West Barnes Library.
    Book in person or call 020 8274 5789.
  - **Thursday 25 April from 1-3pm**
    Mitcham Library.
    Book in person or call 020 8274 5745.

- **1:1 advice on careers and job interviews**
  First Friday of the month
  Colliers Wood Library
  Second Friday of the month
  Pollards Hill Library
  Third Friday of the month
  Wimbledon Library

  Free National Careers Service individual advice sessions are to be held at a number of libraries. To book a place, call 020 3714 8350.

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**Arts and entertainment continued**

- **Marryat Players Chamber Orchestra concert**
  Thursday 11 April from 7.30-8.30pm
  Young musicians conducted by Leandro Silvera to perform in the Great Hall of King’s College School, Southside, Wimbledon Common.
  The concert will feature Vivaldi’s Cello Concerto in G major, Britten’s Simple Symphony and a Mendelssohn String Symphony.
  Free admission, no booking required.

- **Easter Holiday Tennis Camp**
  Monday 8 April – Thursday 18 April from 11am-4pm
  Tennis training along with lots of fun and games will be on offer at a holiday camp at Cranleigh Lawn Tennis and Social Club in Merton Park.
  The camp, which is to run on all weekdays during the school holiday, is suitable for children new to the sport and those wishing to hone their tennis skills.
  Indoor activities will also be available if there is bad weather.

- **Easter egg hunt**
  Sunday 7 April between 10am-12noon
  Enjoy seasonal family fun activities and explore the natural world with Wimbledon Common Nature Club.
  Activities for youngsters aged six to 14, include egg painting and making nests. Meet at the Information Centre. Tickets cost £2 per session.

- **Quiz, fish and chips**
  Saturday 27 April from 7-10pm
  Quiz night with a fish and chip supper at South Mitcham Community Centre.
  Book tables costing £10 per person.

- **Family**
  - **Easter egg hunt**
    Sunday 7 April
    between 10am-12noon
    Enjoy seasonal family fun activities and explore the natural world with Wimbledon Common Nature Club.
    Activities for youngsters aged six to 14, include egg painting and making nests. Meet at the Information Centre. Tickets cost £2 per session.
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- **Quiz, fish and chips**
  Saturday 27 April from 7-10pm
  Quiz night with a fish and chip supper at South Mitcham Community Centre.
  Book tables costing £10 per person.
**Morden Park Easter Egg Hunt**
Friday 19 April until Monday April 22 from 10am–4pm
Everyone is invited to take part in the big four day long chocolate egg hunt in Morden Park and help raise cash for the Mayor of Merton’s Charity Trust. Visitors to the event in London Road will also be able to meet the cast of Colour House Theatre’s production of Alice in Wonderland. Price: £4 per hunt. [find out more](www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk)

**Pond dipping**
Sunday 5 May from 10am–12noon
Youngsters, aged six to 14, can enjoy finding out more about watery creatures with Wimbledon Common Nature Club. Meet at the Information Centre. Tickets £2 per session. [find out more](www.wimbledoncommonnatureclub.wordpress.com)

**Annual May Fair**
Monday 6 May from 1–4pm
The crowning of the May Queen is among the many family entertainments on offer for this bank holiday Monday event at St Saviour’s Church Hall, Grand Drive, Raynes Park. [find out more](www.stsaviour.net)

**Reptile spotting**
Sunday 2 June from 11am–1pm
Brave youngsters can get the chance to meet snakes with Wimbledon Common Nature Club. The event is suitable for youngsters aged six to 14. Cost £2 per session. Meet at the Information Centre. [find out more](www.wimbledoncommonnatureclub.wordpress.com)

**Health and fitness**

- **Contemporary dance workshop for 50+**
Starting Sunday 7 April from 4–5.30pm
Six week short course to explore physical expression for ages 50+ at Nuffield Health, Chapter Way, Collier’s Wood. [find out more](www.keeper-arts.com)

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

- **Free tennis for all**
Every Saturday from 10am–12noon
Joseph Hood Recreation Ground, Martin Way, Morden SM4 4AR. Free tennis coaching for all ages provided by Tennis for Free Charity. [find out more](www.tennisforfree.com)

- **Cranleigh Tennis Club 90th anniversary**
Saturday 11 May from 12noon–6pm
Free tennis, tea and cake is on offer at this open weekend to mark the club’s 90th anniversary. The celebrations are to be held at the club in Cranleigh Road. [find out more](www.cranleightennis.co.uk)
Walks and talks

Talk on behalf of the Wimbledon National Trust Association
Saturday 30 March from 2.15–4pm
Christ Church Hall, Cottenham Park Road, Wimbledon SW19 5RZ. Victoria’s Children of the Dark by Alan Gallop. The story of Queen Victoria’s invisible subjects – women and children who laboured beneath the green and pleasant land, harvesting the coal to fuel the furnaces of the industrial revolution. It follows the real fortunes of seven-year-old Joey Burkinshaw and his family. find out more www.wimbledonnta.org.uk

Walk4Wards: Epsom to St Helier Hospital
Sunday 7 April from 11am–4pm
Join Epsom and St Helier Hospitals’ 20th anniversary celebrations! On Sunday 7 April, Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity invites you to put your walking shoes on and join our first ever Walk4Wards event – an eight mile walk from Epsom Hospital to St Helier Hospital. You can choose to support any of our wards or departments. find out more www.epsom-stheiler.nhs.uk/walk4wards

The Tale of the Tulip
Saturday 27 April from 3.15–5pm
The talk is to be held at Christ Church Hall, Cottenham Park Road, Wimbledon. The spectacular rise and fall of this beautiful garden flower from its introduction into this country in the 14th century will be charted in a talk organised by Wimbledon National Trust Association. Russell Bowes is to illuminate how the bloom captivated so many with its coloured exotic beauty yet fell from grace within the course of a single week. Tickets £3 for members; £3.15 for non-members. find out more www.wimbledonnta.org.uk

Merton Arts Space

Wimbledon Library, Compton Road, Wimbledon

Perform
Every Thursday from 4–5pm and 5–6pm
Unique children’s drama classes, for children aged four to seven, with an emphasis on child development. Perform uses a mix of drama, dance and singing to bring out every child’s full potential.

Tuned in with Jah Wobble
Every Monday from 7pm
Bass legend Jah Wobble is working with Men In Sheds and Pressure Drop to provide a space for people to overcome social isolation and loneliness by playing music together. All sessions are free but attendees do need to register.

Sunshine Art Academy
Every Wednesday from 4–5.30pm
Children aged four plus can get arty at these classes around specially picked themes using a wide variety of mediums.

Fairs and exhibitions

Mitcham Horticultural Society Spring Show
Saturday 23 March between 2–4.30pm
The first show of the year will be a mass of colour, with amazing scents and a wonderful spectacle. St Marks Church Hall, St Marks Road, Mitcham.

Admission is free.
find out more mitchamhorticulturalsociety.org.uk
Morden Park House Wedding Fair
Sunday 24 March from 11am–3pm
This will be your chance to view our brand new courtyard complete with a vintage style gazebo for outdoor summer weddings, a truly unique venue for your special day.

Local companies providing wedding transport, bridal wear, flowers, photography and entertainment will be at the house in London Road, Morden.

Table top sale
Saturday 13 April between 11am–1.30pm
St Saviour’s Church Hall, Grand Drive, Raynes Park.

Mum2mum Markets
Saturday 27 April and 22 June, 10am–12noon
Richards Lodge High School, Lake Road, Wimbledon. Buy top-quality secondhand baby and children’s clothes, toys, books and equipment. Award-winning pop up market with more than 40 sellers. Entrance £2, kids go free. Stalls must be booked in advance.

All Saints Church Summer Fair
Saturday 11 May from 12noon–3pm
Annual fair at the church in All Saints Road, South Wimbledon, featuring refreshments, stalls and games. Free to enter.

Worple Group Art Exhibition
Saturday 11 May from 10am–5.30pm
St Mark’s Church, St Mark’s Place, Wimbledon. More than 20 affordable, contemporary, original paintings and prints by 20 local artists in a wide variety of styles are in included in the show. Entry is free.

Pollards Hill Youth Centre
South Lodge Avenue CR4 1LT. Regular activities, trips, residential breaks run during school holidays. Information from youth centre.

Opening hours

Juniors, 9–13 years: Monday to Friday from 3.15–5.45pm.
Seniors, 14–19 years: Tuesday and Thursday from 6.15–8.15pm.
Mixed ages: Saturday from 10.30am–2.30pm (sports session).

Merton Dog Watch Fair
Saturday 18 May from 10am–4pm
Morden Park Bandstand, London Road, Morden. Major event for dog lovers featuring a show, agility courses and range of stalls.

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Community forums
Anyone with an interest in the local area is invited to attend these free community meetings. Discussions about a range of local topics will be held, with issues being followed up by the relevant organisations.

Raynes Park Thursday 13 June, 7.15pm
Raynes Park Library Hall, Approach Road, Raynes Park.

Wimbledon Wednesday 19 June, 7.15pm
Merton Arts Space, Wimbledon Library, 35 Wimbledon Hill Road SW19 7NB.
Mitcham Carnival is coming to town

**Mitcham Carnival 2019**
Saturday 15 June from 12noon-5pm
Get the date in the diary! This free community event will feature a funfair, a host of entertainment, family activities and a wide range of stalls. The event, organised by Merton Council, will see Three Kings Piece, Commonside West alive with music and dance. There will be 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/mitcham-carnival](http://merton.gov.uk/mitcham-carnival)

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**Easter at Morden Hall Park**

**Cadbury Easter Egg Hunt**
19-22 April, 10am - 4pm
Take a nature challenge to solve the clues and win a tasty Cadbury chocolate prize. £4.50 per hunt

Call 020 8545 6850 for details or go to [nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park)

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**Sensory Nature Trail**
6 - 18 April, 9am - 4pm

**Woodland Adventure**
9 & 10 April, 11am - 4pm

**Quacky Races**
11 & 12 April, 11am - 3pm

When you visit, donate, volunteer or join the National Trust, your support helps us to look after special places for ever, for everyone.
Spend more time in your garden and less time at the local tip.

GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE

Have your garden waste collected from your home every two weeks for £75 per year (from April 2019). That’s less than £2.90 per collection!

Visit merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 020 8274 4902 for details and to sign up.
Beverly Boateng, 17, is a member of Merton Youth Parliament (MYP).

The MYP is a group of young people elected to represent young people who live, work or study in Merton to ensure youngsters’ voices are heard in the decisions that affect them.

Tell us why you got involved with MYP.
We had an assembly at school and our teacher told us MYP gives young people the chance to actually make changes to services and get involved with decision making. I think it’s important that young people’s voices are heard so youth programmes such as clubs and activities in libraries and parks meet their needs.

What have been the highlights so far for you?
I have two favourite things. The first was the health event we held which gave young people the chance to express their views and opinions on mental, sexual and physical health issues. The other was taking part in a decision making group with councillors and senior officers. I really felt there was some key moments when the adults recognised how important our ideas and feedback were, and how keen young people are to help.

What are the most important issues for young people in Merton?
Many young people are not realising or fulfilling their potential and many of them need help, guidance and opportunities to do so.

Is Merton a good place for young people?
I think it is a place where adults do listen to young people’s views and act upon them and, in many cases, help fight for young people’s voices to be heard.