Outdoor creative fun for children
Improving air quality

Win a family ticket for Annie at New Wimbledon Theatre
We asked:

In February, an independent research company asked 1,000 adults and 250 young people for their views on the borough, Merton Council and local services for our regular residents’ survey.

“You said”

- The vast majority of residents are satisfied with the area they live in (89%).
- Merton is a great place for families and the survey showed that residents feel safe in their local area, with 98% feeling safe during the day and 84% after dark.
- Overall satisfaction with the council has increased slightly to 70%, which is 10% above national figures.
- There was an increase in satisfaction with education provision, libraries, leisure and sports facilities.
- There was a significant increase in the rating of street lighting, but other services have seen a decrease, in particular refuse collection, recycling and street cleaning, which, at the time, had been disrupted by service changes.
- Respondents told us the thing which most needs improving in Merton is the need for housing to be affordable.

We did:

- We are already acting on some of the issues raised. Over a third of the homes on the Plough Lane stadium site will be affordable. Our ambitious plans to regenerate Morden town centre, Ravensbury, High Path and Eastfields include affordable homes.
- The residents’ survey was carried out soon after the largest service change that the council has made in recent times – to the recycling and rubbish collection service. This affected almost all households in the borough.
- Since the survey, recycling rates have continued to increase.
- We are working closely with Veolia to drive up the performance of the collection service and improve street cleaning along with the three other councils in the South London Waste Partnership.

What you can do to help:

- Reduce your waste and recycle more. Please ensure you separate your recycling and rubbish into the correct containers for collection. For information and to report fly-tipping visit: merton.gov.uk/recycling
- Volunteer to be a Street Champion by emailing environmental.development@merton.gov.uk

The Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Stephen Alambris

writes for My Merton

It is great to see families enjoying the abundance of green spaces in Merton at this time of year. This issue of My Merton is packed with ideas for making the most of our parks during the summer months, including walking, jogging or running the Merton Mile; having a zero-waste picnic in the park or being inspired by the Wimbledon Championships to pick up a tennis racket on one of our courts. Whatever outdoor activity you choose during the school summer holidays – cycling, football, golf or splashing around in one of our paddling pools – family fun is guaranteed.

Merton is a great place for families, and this is borne out by the findings of our bi-annual residents’ survey, carried out earlier this year, which emphasised respondents’ high opinion of the borough’s parks and open spaces. There were big improvements in how schools, libraries and leisure facilities, including the new state-of-the-art leisure centre in Morden Park, were rated. The survey also showed a real demand for homes that people in the borough can afford. We hear this loud and clear, and I’m working hard with the council’s officers and partners to find ways to provide more affordable new homes for families and to help existing tenants by bringing in a landlord register so that private renters have more security.

Our residents’ survey is important to me. Although I’m regularly out and about meeting residents and my door is always open to them, the survey enables me to seek the views of even more people and for respondents to influence the future direction of the council. It’s increasingly challenging to run the council when, every year, reductions in government grant mean we have to agree to cut public services, so it’s great to hear from our residents – the people who know the borough best – about what we’re doing well and what priorities we need to focus on. I’m pleased to see that you share our determination for Merton to be a great place for families, as they make the most of our parks and open spaces this summer.
Community News
The latest news from around the borough

Features
Working life
Acacia Centre Playground manager Julie Moore

Culture
FilmMerton coming to a venue near you

Environment
Improving air quality

Enforcement
Targeting fly-tippers and litterers

Health
Support for Merton’s young parents

Community safety
Tackling knife crime together

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

content

My Merton costs only 12p a copy to produce
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 1 July 2019.

My Merton is published by the London Borough of Merton and is distributed free to 80,000 households in the borough four times a year.

Editorial communications@merton.gov.uk merton.gov.uk/mymerton

What’s on listings:
Fill in the online events form at: merton.gov.uk/events

Adverts
For all advertising enquiries, contact communications@merton.gov.uk

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

@Merton_Council
www.facebook.com/mertoncouncil
www.flickr.com/mertoncouncil
www.youtube.com/mertoncouncil

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

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

15 The joy of lifelong learning
New courses for adults with learning difficulties

10 Have fun and get fit

20 A zero-waste summer

contact us
merton.gov.uk
Registering to vote:
020 8274 4901
Council tax: 020 8274 4904
Waste collection services: 020 8274 4902
Benefits advice: 020 8545 4178
Parking: 020 8545 4661
Libraries: 020 8545 3783
Anti-social behaviour hotline: 020 8274 4907
Switchboard: 020 8274 4901

My Merton is published by the London Borough of Merton and is distributed free to 80,000 households in the borough four times a year.

Editorial communications@merton.gov.uk merton.gov.uk/mymerton

What’s on listings:
Fill in the online events form at: merton.gov.uk/events

Adverts
For all advertising enquiries, contact communications@merton.gov.uk

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

My Merton costs only 12p a copy to produce
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 1 July 2019.

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 1 July 2019.
Picnic celebration to welcome a new park

Families attended the Picnic in the Park event to celebrate the opening of a new park for Merton residents. Morley Park, located between Copse Hill and Cottenham Park Road in West Wimbledon, was officially opened on Saturday 4 May.

Attractions at the new park include a meadow and woodlands, which provide great walking opportunities, in addition to a pavilion and playing fields, which are to be leased to Ursuline High School.

The 12.5 acre parkland was created by developer Berkeley Homes as part of the requirements of the planning consent for the Wimbledon Hill Park scheme.

Merton Council has now taken custodianship of the park to ensure all residents can enjoy the attractions for many decades to come.

Expansion of grants for vulnerable residents

An expanded grants programme has been launched to fund voluntary and community groups which help support Merton residents, including the most vulnerable in our communities. Merton Council is one of only a handful of boroughs not to cut funding to this sector, which makes such a vital contribution to residents’ lives. The funding programme for 2019–22 has five separate pots, which are:

- information and advice services
- support services for charities and community groups
- wellbeing services to improve health
- carers’ services
- Healthwatch Merton

As run in a business-like way, the council worked closely with voluntary sector groups to design the funding programme to ensure the needs of residents are met.

The council has commissioned a total of 15 strategic partners from April 2019. As part of its information and advice offer it is funding Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth, South West London Law Centres and Springfield Advice and Law Centre. It is also funding three new strategic partners which are the Association for the Polish Family to provide support for Polish and Eastern European communities; Commonside Trust, which is to host a legal advice outreach service with South West London Law Centres and a new Merton Deaf Advice Service, run by deafPLUS, providing social welfare advice to deaf and hard of hearing residents.

Find out more
For the full list of strategic partners visit: merton.gov.uk

Record crowds attended event to discover Merton’s heritage

More than 2,000 people flocked to the biggest ever Merton Heritage Discovery Day to find out more about the borough’s colourful past.

The event on Saturday 11 May was staged as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations for Merton Heritage Centre.

The annual showcase for the borough’s history featured a larger-than-ever heritage marketplace with 30 stalls from heritage, arts, community and environmental groups from across Merton.

The borough’s history was also brought alive with open air cinema screenings, storytelling, art workshops led by Made in Merton and Wandle Industrial Museum and a host of fun children’s activities. The programme included African tales by award-winning storyteller Alim Kamara and a talk on Tooting Nurseries and the Daffodil King, given by Geoff Simmons. Bruce Robertson and Digital Drama gave a presentation on World War II and the Home Front and Rifat Wahhab spoke about the fascinating history of Jamdani sari making.

Find out more
merton.gov.uk/heritage

Free pedal power for children

Merton Council is offering free cycling courses for children aged four to 18 during the summer holidays. Bikeability cycle training is available for complete beginners, improvers and those who wish to cycle on the road. Training is provided across the borough by the council’s accredited cycle trainers.

Find out more
To snap up a place on these popular courses, visit www.cyclinginstructor.com
New mayor

Wimbledon Park Councillor Janice Howard was elected to serve as Mayor of Merton at a special Mayor Making ceremony on Wednesday 15 May.

The new Mayor took over the role from Lower Morden ward representative, Councillor Mary Curtin, who served as Mayor of Merton for the past year. Councillor Howard, who was elected to Merton Council in 2010, has lived in the borough since 1990.

Return of the peregrine falcons

The popular Merton peregrine falcons returned to the roof of the civic centre for the fourth year in a row.

Once again, the pair successfully reared their family. Peregrine watchers have been thrilled to see the couple’s four eggs hatch into white fluffy chicks and grow into fledgling falcons.

Catch the action on the special webcam.

Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Government has launched a scheme to compensate residents who have suffered from not having the documentation to prove their right to live in the UK.

Anyone who came to the UK from the Caribbean or any other Commonwealth country before 1 January 1973, and in certain cases their children and grandchildren, are eligible to claim compensation. It is also open to people of all nationalities who arrived in the UK before 31 December 1988 who are settled here.

Claims can be made for the loss of jobs, education, homes or health services as well as for detention and deportation.

The scheme is also open to:
- the estates of those who are now deceased but who would have otherwise been eligible to claim compensation.
- close family members of eligible claimants where there has been a significant impact on their life or where there is evidence of certain direct financial costs.

For information on how to make a claim, call the Freephone Windrush Helpline on 0800 678 1925 on weekdays between 9am and 5pm.

Four year plan for children and young people

Young residents have been playing a key role in setting priorities for work to continually improve the lives of children and young people across Merton. Merton Council is working with partner organisations to refresh the Merton Children and Young People’s Plan, which will set out priorities for their work up until 2023.

Children, families and the Children’s Trust Partnership have been extensively consulted on the plan to make sure their views and concerns are reflected.

A total of 1,287 pupils gave responses to a survey on the four-year plan, which was sent out to secondary schools across the borough. Consultation has also taken place with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities as well as primary aged children.

Litter heroes

Street cleaning crews, councillors and residents joined forces to help give the borough a spring clean and remind everyone to bin their litter responsibly.

Merton Council held a litter picking event in Pollards Hill on Saturday 6 April as part of the Great British Spring Clean campaign. The council backed the national campaign to encourage everyone to be a litter hero and do their bit to keep streets, parks and open spaces looking beautiful and litter free.
**Young stars shine at leisure centre opening**

Teenage diving star Eden Cheng helped ensure Morden Leisure Centre was officially opened in style. The inspirational 16-year-old sensational clinched a gold medal in the 10 metre women’s synchro with partner, Lois Toulson, at the European Championships in Glasgow last year.

An afternoon bursting with free family fun was held at the sparkling new community facility in the heart of picturesque Morden Park. Eden Cheng joined outgoing Merton Mayor Councillor Mary Curtin for the unveiling of the plaque on Saturday 30 March. Attractions at the event included a giant inflatable game as well as a range of free taster sessions in a host of sports.

Morden resident eight-year-old Lara showcased her talents and love of the new centre by interviewing both Eden Cheng and Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis during the afternoon.

The centre boasts a 25m six-lane pool, another pool with a moveable floor for aqua aerobics, toddler and diving classes, in addition to a 100-station fitness studio with the latest kit. Business-like Merton Council invested in the new centre as a replacement for the ageing 1960s-built Morden Park Pool, which had become energy inefficient and expensive to maintain. The former pool building has been demolished and the site will be landscaped.

**New Cabinet Members welcomed**

Councillor Laxmi Attawar has been appointed the Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities and Councillor Eleanor Stringer has taken on the role of Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education.

Councillor Attawar is well known in the local community as a great advocate for equality, and Councillor Stringer has worked on projects in hundreds of schools across the country, with a particular focus on raising standards for disadvantaged children.

The following cabinet roles were also confirmed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis in May:

- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance – Councillor Mark Allison
- Cabinet Member for Children’s Services – Councillor Kelly Braund
- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and the Environment – Councillor Tobin Byers
- Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture – Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah
- Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector Partnerships and Community Safety – Councillor Edith Macauley MBE
- Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport – Councillor Martin Whelton

**Queen honours councillor**

Councillor David Williams, who has served Merton Council for 42 years, was awarded the MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. The councillor, first elected to the council aged just 22, was recognised for his political service in local government. Cllr Williams was the leader of Merton Council from 2006 until 2010 and served as mayor for the year 2012/3.

Liberal Democrat Jenifer Gould was elected as a Cannon Hill ward councillor in a by-election held on 20 June. Turnout was 42%.

Queen honours councillor

Councillor David Williams, who has served Merton Council for 42 years, was awarded the MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List. The councillor, first elected to the council aged just 22, was recognised for his political service in local government. Cllr Williams was the leader of Merton Council from 2006 until 2010 and served as mayor for the year 2012/3.

Liberal Democrat Jenifer Gould was elected as a Cannon Hill ward councillor in a by-election held on 20 June. Turnout was 42%.
Keeping Merton informed

Merton goes over the rainbow

A stunning rainbow has landed in Wimbledon to celebrate the town’s inclusivity, welcome its first LGBT+ bar, and support this year’s Pride in London events.

Merton Council has installed a rainbow crossing in Wimbledon Broadway by the recently opened CMYK bar. The multi-coloured crossing has been created in the design of the rainbow flag – which has been adopted, across the globe, as a symbol to celebrate the LGBT+ community and its diversity.

The month long Pride in London event aims to celebrate the creativity of the LGBT+ community, challenge prejudice and campaign for equal rights for members both at home and abroad.

Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities, Councillor Laxmi Attawar said: “Merton is one of the most welcoming and safest boroughs in London and this high profile colourful artwork is a great reminder to us all, that as a community we value diversity.”

The Pride in London festival culminates in a parade in central London on Saturday 7 July. [find out more](mertonlightforum.org.uk)

Merton’s first zero waste store

A grocery shop on a mission to reduce plastic waste opened its doors in Merton Abbey Mills. Zéro aims to give residents the chance to buy the products they love without the burden of lots of unnecessary packaging to dispose of. Wimbledon couple Alicia and Josh Bulbeck set up the shop to help reduce the negative impact on the environment from excessive single-use packaging waste.

The shop offers a good selection of store cupboard essentials including cereals, flour, pasta, rice, beans, nuts, dried fruits, chocolate, oils and honey. Zéro is at Unit 7, The Apprentice Shop, 14 Watermill Way, London SW19 2RD. [find out more](www.thezeroshop.com)

Tennis club nets prestigious award

A tennis club in Merton Park, popular with families, has netted a prestigious award.

Cranleigh Tennis and Social Club has been awarded Surrey Tennis Club of the Year by the national Lawn Tennis Association. The award was in recognition of the club’s sterling work to develop tennis opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. More than 220 youngsters regularly play at the club, which runs a IPlay30 group for young adults with significant learning disabilities and a tennis academy to hone the skills of future tennis stars.

The club, which is currently celebrating its 90th anniversary with a host of events open to all, has seen its membership shoot up in the past five years to more than 450 members. [find out more](www.cranleightennis.co.uk)
Club celebrates its landmark 80th anniversary

A club which has been bringing residents together for a wide range of sporting activities and social events for eight decades celebrated its milestone in great style.

The vibrant Central Ward Residents and Sports Club in Ashridge Way, Morden, is now welcoming new members from all backgrounds and ages to join. The club, which is one of the longest running clubs for residents in Merton, opened its doors in June 1939. Long-serving member Ron Luke, now in his mid 90s, said: “All the staff are extremely friendly. I have very happy memories of time spent at the club.”

In addition to promoting a range of sports from darts to golf, fishing and pigeon racing, the venue has also provided a well-loved social hub with a host of entertainment events throughout the year.

The club also caters for those important events in residents’ lives such as christenings, birthday parties, weddings, anniversaries and funerals. To celebrate its landmark, the club held a host of events last month, including a children’s fun day and a music night.

Anyone interested in joining can drop into the club, which is located between 55 and 57 Ashridge Way in Morden or call 020 8542 5814. www.central-ward.co.uk

Merton children raise the roof at Royal Albert Hall

A staggering 1,500 young singers from across Merton performed at the prestigious Royal Albert Hall.

Children from 19 Merton schools performed in a mass choir as part of the Liquid History concert. The Merton Music Foundation, which stages the Music for Life concerts at the central London venue every two years, is now planning the event for 2021, which is to mark its 30th anniversary.

Community orchestra now in its second year

Colliers Wood Community Orchestra celebrated its first year of music-making with a well-attended open rehearsal and drinks reception.

The instrumental collective welcomes musicians of levels, from beginners to the most advanced, and its repertoire is a mixture of popular, classical and contemporary pieces.

The community group was formed to cater particularly to the lapsed musician who possibly has an abandoned instrument in the loft. Musicians playing less traditional orchestra instruments such as saxophones, tenor or baritone horns and euphoniums, are also welcomed to join the group.

Regular rehearsals are currently held at the Community Centre on the first and third Tuesday of the month and at Guardian Centre on alternate Wednesday evenings, as well as on some Saturdays.

Catch the musicians this summer at the Singlegate Fair on Saturday 13 July and at the Summer Showstoppers concert with Colliers Wood Chorus at Christ Church, Colliers Wood, on Sunday 28 July.

Call Heathrow Community Relations team on 0800 307 7996 with any questions.
Gearing up for RideLondon

Once again Merton residents can enjoy ringside seats at one of the world’s greatest cycling races. Thousands of amateur and professional cyclists are to take part in the Prudential RideLondon event on Sunday 4 August. Last year around 25,000 riders took part in the 100 mile Surrey to London race with hundreds more taking part in shorter routes.

Both Wimbledon and Raynes Park are top spots for spectators to cheer on the riders, many of whom are raising cash for charities. Wimbledon is at the 90 mile mark and the first riders are due to appear at 9.15am with the last around 5pm. There is also set to be a real party atmosphere with a host of street entertainments on offer.

The council will be working to ensure residents and businesses enjoy the high profile event. For information visit tfl.gov.uk/ridelondon and www.prudentialridelondon.co.uk

On your marks, get set, GO for new track

News of grant funding for a running track has been welcomed by children at an outstanding special school. A £16,125 grant has been awarded to Merton Council, by the London Marathon Charitable Trust, towards the 200 metre track planned for Cricket Green School in Mitcham.

Work on the running track, which is to offer high quality, accessible athletics and fitness opportunities for children with special educational needs and the wider community, is due to begin over the summer.

Celia Dawson, the headteacher of the school in Lower Green West, said the running track will have ‘a major impact on health and well-being and community cohesion’.

Clamping down on rogue landlords

New legal powers are set to help Merton Council take enforcement action against private sector landlords who are letting out unsuitable or dangerous properties.

The council’s Cabinet has agreed to look into developing a selective licensing scheme for landlords in areas where there are high numbers of privately rented homes and increased anti-social behaviour or crime.

The council has the powers to prosecute landlords or impose a fine for breaches of the Housing Act 2004. Around a quarter of housing in Merton is privately rented and in some parts of the borough more than a third of homes are rented by private landlords.

Merton Council’s Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing and Transport, Councillor Martin Whelton said: “We are using powers available to us to clamp down on rogue landlords and use enforcement powers on those who are not meeting their legal obligations to their tenants.”

Sensory spaces for children

Themed sensory areas will be created in Merton’s libraries for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Merton Council’s seven award winning libraries will each have its own theme for the special areas such as mystical forests, space and water. Specialist books and an activity programme of events will also be on offer.

The project, which is the first of its kind in the UK, is being funded by a £94,826 Arts Council England grant, which the council successfully bid for.

Merton Council’s Cabinet Member for Commerce, Leisure and Culture, Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah said: “Our library staff and volunteers will also be working with our partners and schools to break down barriers and dispel misconceptions of special educational needs and disabilities, reduce isolation and open new doors of opportunity for children and their families.”
Have fun and get fit in Merton this summer

Warm sunny weather is the perfect encouragement to get out and get active. Whether you’re taking up jogging or just fancy a summer stroll, Merton’s 100 parks and gardens provide the stunning backdrop that makes exercise hard to resist.

So, if you and your family have been promising to make more of the great outdoors, read our top ideas for enjoying the summertime in Merton.

Follow the Merton Mile

You can run, jog or walk it, but however you travel, a daily mile is a great way to improve your fitness and general well-being. To give you a bit of encouragement, a new, signposted one-mile route around Figgies Marsh was launched in the spring. The route is marked out by arrows, with signs along the way featuring handy fitness tips. It’s suitable for all ages and abilities, so why not challenge yourself to complete the Merton Mile, if not every day, then as often as you get the chance. You can let us know how you get on by posting on social media using #MertonMile.

Splashing around

Cool off in the summer heat by visiting Merton’s brilliant paddling pools, which are all free to use. The interactive play pools at Wimbledon Park and Tamworth Recreation Ground, Mitcham, are great fun and there are six other neighbourhood pools too. The paddling pools are all open from 21 July until 2 September – apart from Wimbledon Park, which is open already.

Open-air fitness

Merton has 10 well-equipped outdoor gyms across the borough, which are perfect for a fresh air workout – or adding some strength and stamina training to your run. Whether you want to increase your fitness, or start a gentle exercise programme, the gyms are fun and free to use.

Wet and wild

Wimbledon Park Watersports and Outdoor Centre is the perfect spot to try sailing, kayaking, archery, climbing, orienteering and many more activities, on water and dry land. There’s a mix of taster sessions and longer courses for adults and children, all led by fully-trained staff in a friendly environment. For example, the multi-watersports camp gives children aged eight to 16 the chance to try a range of activities in water and on land. If you can sail already, there are pay and play sessions for adults. And if you’re looking for party ideas with a difference, the centre has several options from kiwi canoe parties to a build-your-own-raft challenge.
Active kids

Don’t be bored during the school summer holidays – Merton Active Kids sessions have plenty of options from golf or football to arts and crafts. Open to ages five+ (depending on activity).

Anyone for tennis?

If you’re feeling inspired by Wimbledon, there are plenty of opportunities to learn tennis or improve your game. We have more than 60 courts in parks across the borough. Most are currently operating a pay and play system, however a new online system to book courts is being rolled out over the summer. For more information on courts and booking arrangements visit: tennisinmerton.com

Active all ages

If you love playing football, but no longer have the knees for it, Age UK Merton in partnership with AFC Wimbledon and Canons Leisure Centre offer walking football sessions. Or try a low-impact water workout at Morden Leisure Centre or the Canons.

Party in the park

Eastern Electrics will once again be returning to Morden Park with two days of music and DJ sets from world-class acts including MK, Skream, Hannah Wants, Orbital DJ Set Matt Jam Lamont and Goldie. Catch the festival on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 August.

Mud and more

This year sees the return of Pretty Muddy to Morden Park on 31 August in aid of Cancer Research. This muddy obstacle course offers everyone, regardless of ability, the chance to climb, crawl and slide their way towards beating cancer. Choose from a 5k or 10k event – open to anyone aged 13+.

Or book now for Rough Runner, coming up in October. This Gladiators-style obstacle course has five, 10 and 15k routes, as well as a kids’ event.

Find out more

For watersports, paddling pools, tennis and Merton Active Kids visit merton.gov.uk/leisure

Eastern Electrics easternelectrics.com

Pretty Muddy – raceforlife.cancerresearchuk.org

or for Rough Runner – roughrunner.com

For walking football visit ageuk.org.uk/merton

For Morden Leisure Centre sessions better.org.uk/morden-leisure-centre

Online booking links for tennis courts tennisinmerton.com
Providing a creative space for youngsters

Encouraging young people to get active is a key priority for Merton Council. My Merton caught up with Julie Moore, the manager at the Acacia Adventure Playground to find out how the stunning space gives young people the chance to enjoy creative, spontaneous outdoor play.

Julie Moore is the manager for the Acacia Adventure Playground in Mitcham, which is an amazing space where five to 16-year-olds are free to explore. The playground is open after school, Saturdays and during the holidays ... and entry is free!

Julie said: “It’s just a great outdoor space. Children have access to the elements, to play in water or get dirty. We have really tall structures, a large sandpit, swings, and arts and craft indoors. It’s a child-only space where they are free to get on with the things they want to do – not what adults think they should be doing.”

For Julie, the best bit of the job is its great variety: “Every day is different and working with young people is great.”

Her team’s challenge is keeping things fresh: “We’re always shaking things up. We don’t want the environment to become boring, so we listen to the children’s ideas and make sure that we can see them through.”

Activities vary with the seasons, plus there are trips away such as to play laser tag, see a panto or visit the beach. Julie said: “During the summer we always have a messy play day with activities like flour or water fights. Everyone gets messy and the place is trashed, but the kids absolutely love it.

“We allow children to use tools, with the staff, to help build structures – they are currently building a look-out tower among the trees. We also have a lovely garden area where they grow vegetables, which they pick and eat in their sandwiches.”

According to Julie, encouraging children to be active starts with giving them space to enjoy the outdoors: “Parents worry a lot about the weather or getting dirty. I’d say put aside those adult worries and just allow children to be free and have fun. The more you encourage them, the more they’ll want to be outside, not indoors with a computer.”

Parents can check out the playground on 7 August, National Play Day; the one day of the year when adults are allowed on site. The playground is also available for hire for birthday parties or school groups.

find out more
The Acacia Adventure Playground is at 230 Acacia Road, Mitcham Eastfields. For full opening times visit merton.gov.uk/play-areas
FilmMerton – the borough’s exciting celebration of cinema is well underway, with plenty of opportunities to get involved this summer and beyond.

The project is the result of a successful bid for one of the Mayor of London’s coveted Cultural Impact Awards in 2017. The award has led to a series of pop-up film seasons, pulled together by community groups and high profile curators, as well as four new films currently in production and a virtual reality festival happening in Mitcham next year.

**Film seasons**

People from across the borough came forward with ideas for 12 film seasons about subjects that matter to them. So far, local groups have presented their curated seasons on topics as diverse as food on film and the impact of gangs and peer pressure on young people.

There’ve been screenings about inspirational women and the hidden histories of black and minority ethnic communities, as well as a season from Merton’s Dementia Alliance.

Highlights coming up include a season in Mitcham barbershops, culminating in a showing of *Black Panther*, and one inspired by K-pop, curated by the Korean British Cultural Exchange. There’ll also be films demonstrating cooperation and understanding in the wake of divisions over Brexit.

Jo Brand is among 12 guest curators – she’ll be making her selection later in the year. Award-winning comedian Francesca Martinez has chosen her pick of politically challenging films including *I, Daniel Blake*. Artist Alison Lapper will put forward a season showing disability in a positive light.

**In production**

FilmMerton has also commissioned four new films, two by aspiring local filmmakers aged 18 to 25 and two by established names. In each case the remit is to shoot an original short film within the borough – keep a look out for filming in your area.

**Coming up**

The third element of the project, Mitcham’s Virtual Reality Film Festival, will take place in March 2020. Whether you’re a fan of VR or just curious, there will be plenty of opportunities to immerse yourself in this extraordinary art form – watch this space.

**find out more**

For full details of all the up-and-coming seasons and how to get involved as a volunteer, visit mertonculture.org or follow @filmmerton on twitter.
No idling in Merton’s work to improve kids’ air quality

Tackling air pollution around schools to protect children’s health is a top priority for Merton Council. My Merton takes a look at how everyone can help improve air quality by just switching off car engines outside schools or choosing different ways to travel.

Clean air for all
Air pollution is a big issue for London, with almost 10,000 deaths a year attributed to poor air quality across the capital. Merton Council is working on a number of schemes with residents to help improve air quality around schools.

Measuring pollution
With their developing lungs, children are most vulnerable to pollution, so the council has committed to monitoring air quality around all Merton schools.

This monitoring helps us identify which schools to target with measures to mitigate and tackle poor air quality. These could include planting schemes to create green screens, which soak up pollution, as well as moves to ban traffic from entrances or look at the way pupils travel to and from school.

Anti-idling campaign
The council is encouraging drivers to turn off their engines while waiting or in traffic, especially outside schools. Events around the borough have seen parent volunteers trained to talk to drivers about why idling is an issue. Drivers have responded positively to the campaign – in many cases idling was something they’d never thought about.

‘No idling’ signs have also been installed across the borough, with many more locations to come, warning about new council powers to fine drivers who leave their engines running unnecessarily.

Four things you can do to minimise air pollution

1. Turn your engine off if your car is stationary, especially outside schools or at level crossings.
2. Choose active travel wherever you can – walking or cycling to your destination is better for your health and could significantly reduce pollution levels.
3. If you’re replacing your car, consider an electric vehicle or joining a car club instead.
4. Driving habits can have an impact on exhaust emissions – avoid revving your engine, speeding or driving so you need to accelerate or brake suddenly. Having your car serviced regularly and keeping tyres at the right pressure can help too.

Avoid lighting bonfires, which are a significant cause of pollution during the summer. Sign up for the council’s garden waste collections instead. South London councils are working together to promote air quality under the banner Love Clean Air.

Find out more and get tips on other ways to cut air pollution at lovecleanair.org.
The joy of lifelong learning is for everyone in Merton

My Merton finds out how a new programme of courses is bringing the joy of gaining new skills to adults across Merton who have learning difficulties.

For Leon, who is 44, and has autism, a cookery course at Colliers Wood’s Leyton Road Centre has given him the confidence to plan, shop for and cook his own meals. He said: “I am happy to be able to make a meal for myself now. I like shopping for food.”

Leon is one of a number of Merton residents, with learning difficulties, who have discovered new interests, made friends and grown in confidence, thanks to a new programme of courses delivered by Merton’s Adult Learning Service, which cover everything from art and craft to understanding democracy. Courses are delivered by expert training providers on behalf of the council. The venues are centres across Merton, chosen to provide a safe environment with good transport links and drop-off points.

The aim is to help learners develop the skills to live independently and find employment, where appropriate, and enhance participants’ wellbeing. Everyone joining the programme receives an assessment to help them find the courses that are right for them, with courses available for all levels and abilities. Subjects on offer include maths, English and computing. There are sessions in active leisure and the chance to learn about the wider world too.

Danielle, who is 35 and has autism, has been following the arts and crafts course at Pollards Hill Library. The course involves studying the work of artists as a starting point for practical projects. For Danielle it has broadened her understanding of art and given a focus to her own work. In particular, the paintings of LS Lowry definitely resonated. “I really enjoyed looking at Lowry and I bought a book about his work to read at home,” she said.

Enrol now

Courses for people with learning difficulties and disabilities are just some of many opportunities provided by Merton’s Adult Learning Service. Every year 3,500 residents enrol on courses, covering a wide variety of topics. If you’d like to develop a new skill, find out more at merton.gov.uk/adultlearning. Most courses will take a summer break, restarting in September. Enrolment on new courses is already underway.
feature
Targeting fly-tippers and litterers

Enforcement in action

Clearing up litter and fly-tipping costs Merton Council millions of pounds a year, which is cash that could be spent on other services. Residents share the council’s concerns over the actions of the thoughtless or criminal few whose littering or dumping rubbish impact on the quality of life for everyone. But with your help, we’re fighting back using fines and court action against those responsible.

Prosecution
We have prosecuted 11 people, who each received fines of £1,300 and a criminal record, for large-scale fly-tipping. The prosecutions followed covert operations as part of the council’s We Are Watching You campaign, aimed at cracking down on enviro-crime.

Using hidden cameras, and following resident tip-offs, our officers observed the perpetrators dumping furniture and general domestic waste – all of which could have been disposed of free of charge at the council’s recycling centre. We also seized vehicles suspected of being used for fly-tipping offences.

Illegal encampments
The council is tackling illegal encampments, and the fly-tipping they attract, with a borough-wide injunction banning unauthorised camping on parks and open spaces, including Mitcham Common.

In recent years, such encampments have affected residents’ quality of life, with the cost of clean-up operations running to many thousands of pounds. The injunction means that the council can request anyone occupying land unlawfully to leave, and seize vehicles if necessary. Breaching the injunction could also mean a large fine or prison sentence.
Be wary
If you’ve been renovating your home this summer, be cautious about anyone offering to remove waste for you, which could be fly-tipped. Should this happen, you may be held responsible and face prosecution. Always use registered waste carriers to remove any rubbish – ask where your rubbish is going and for the operator’s licence number and a waste transfer note.

Fixed penalty fines
In the year to April 2019, 7,000 people received £150 fines for dropping litter – including cigarette butts. During the same period, 33 fines, of £400 each, were issued for incidents of fly-tipping.

Around two thirds of all fly-tips are household waste, and residents who dump it face prosecution. So, remember, the following are examples of those which YOU could be fined for:

1. Leaving bags of household rubbish by a wheelie bin or public litter bins
2. Leaving waste next to a neighbourhood recycling bank
3. Discarding waste on the grass verge

Find out more... Dispose of bulky waste for free at the council’s recycling centre on Garth Road, Morden or book a bulky waste collection for a charge.
To report fly-tipping, visit merton.gov.uk/fly-tipping.
Win a family ticket to *Annie* at New Wimbledon Theatre

Lesley Joseph leads the cast in the acclaimed revival of the musical set in 1930s New York. Famed for her role in television sitcom *Birds of a Feather*, the actress is to star as orphanage boss Miss Hannigan. Brave young Annie is forced to live a life of misery at the orphanage. However, her luck changes when she is chosen to spend a fairytale Christmas with a billionaire, but spiteful Miss Hannigan plans to spoil everything. Packed with great songs including *It’s The Hard-Knock Life* – this is a show not to be missed!

To win a family ticket to *Annie*, visit [merton.gov.uk/mymerton](http://merton.gov.uk/mymerton) to enter and answer the following question.

**Which hit sitcom featured Lesley Joseph as nosy neighbour Dorien?**

a) Liver Birds  
b) Birds of a Feather  
c) Thunderbirds

Closing date for entries: Wednesday 31 July 2019.

**Terms and conditions:**

The tickets are non-transferable. There are no cash alternatives, travel or accommodation included in the prize. The competition is for a family ticket (four tickets) to see *Annie* at New Wimbledon Theatre, valid on Monday 11 November 2019.
Support for Merton’s young parents

Merton Council’s innovative new project to support young parents is successfully helping more than 50 families. My Merton takes a closer look at the project, which aims to ensure all families can make the most of the opportunities our borough has to offer.

Having a baby can be challenging, whatever your age, but young people who become parents before they are 20-years-old can face particular challenges. While many young parents cope brilliantly, some do struggle. However, a Merton Council project is proving to be successful in helping young parents get the support they need.

The project uses nurses and health visitors to put young parents in touch with Merton’s existing network of children’s centres and linked sites. The centres play a vital role in helping parents through the difficult early years, with support around health, child development, feeding, education and other issues.

Previously, few under-20s attended the centres. But with encouragement from health visitors and targeted sessions – including playgroups, baby massage and a young parents group – numbers have grown to 50 families.

Intensive support from the nursing team lasts for the first two years of the child’s life, during which parents receive housing, health and benefits advice. There are low-cost outings – to city farms, for example – and access to the charity Little Village, which provides free baby clothes and toys. There’s also bespoke support for parents of children with complex needs and for homeless mums.

Parents receive information about free early education and childcare entitlements too, which can help them back into study, training and employment.

The results have been inspiring. One young parent said: “I have come into my own as a young mum – there has been lots of different information about feeding, sleeping, teething and more.”

Teenage pregnancy rates fall

Meanwhile, the rate of teenage pregnancy in Merton has been falling to an all-time low. Data from the Office of National Statistics confirms that Merton’s under-18 conception rate is now below national and London levels. This achievement puts the borough within the top 10 of all local authorities in England for progress on this complex public health issue.

The change follows years of partnership work, including well-publicised young people’s contraceptive and sexual health services. These, coupled with quality relationships and sex education have been equipping young people with the confidence to make positive life choices.

Rising educational achievement in Merton has also contributed.

find out more There’s information for young people on a range of services and issues at www.gettington.org.uk.
A zero-waste summer

Summer is a wonderful time to enjoy eating al fresco, but do spare a thought for the impact you are having on the planet. My Merton gives some top tips on how to pack up a zero-waste picnic and ways to always make sure your outdoor eating treat does not become a fly-tipping eyesore for others.

Pack a waste-free picnic

Everyone loves a picnic and supermarkets are happy to encourage the trend with plenty of pre-packed food items on the summer shelves. Whether it’s ready-made salads, snacks or chopped fruit, buying a picnic is convenient, but it’s a costly option that increases your waste footprint.

• Instead, plan your picnic ahead, making use of food in your fridge – add mayonnaise to leftovers for sandwich fillings, use olives from a jar for a pasta salad or slice up a pineapple at a fraction of the cost of pre-prepared fruit.

• It’s often tempting to over cater for a picnic, so avoid food waste by thinking realistically about how much food you really need. If you do have leftovers, take them home for disposal in your food waste caddy.

• Dispose of any rubbish properly. If nearby bins are full to bursting, please take your litter home. Never leave bags of rubbish beside bins – it could land you with a fine.

• Get into the swing of taking your rubbish home and put it in the correct bins to ensure it can be recycled.

Bottle it

When temperatures soar, it is important to keep hydrated. However, we have all seen recently, in high profile television shows and campaigns, the devastating impact that so much plastic consumption is having on wildlife and our environment. Could 2019 be the summer when you ditch single-use plastic water bottles?

It’s not easy to remember your water bottle every time, so if you do buy a drink whilst out, make sure you recycle the bottle. Around 35.8 million plastic bottles are used every day in the UK but only 19.8 million are currently recycled. Please take your bottles home and recycle them in your green box – or communal bin, if you live in a flat.
The recycling journey of your picnic waste

If you’ve ever questioned the point of recycling, it’s worth finding out more about the journey your everyday items, including your picnic waste, take once they’ve been collected from your home.

**Plastic**
Bottles, tubs, pots and trays, which you place in your Merton recycling box go to one of three special plants where they are sorted partly by hand and partly by machine, then by colour and type using lasers. Plastic is then shredded, melted down and reformed into pellets, which are used to make new and useful items – from fleeces and football tops to toys and even picnic benches.

**Drinks cans**
Too are sorted into different metals, using magnets, before being crushed down and melted into ingots in a furnace. These ingots are used to make many new products – from more tins and cans to car parts.

**Cardboard boxes**
Are shredded and mixed with water to make a pulp. The pulp is cleaned up and pressed through rollers to create a fresh sheet of cardboard.

**Food waste**
Including teabags, veg peelings and banana skins are taken to a processing plant known as an anaerobic digester, where they’re broken down to create a fertiliser for crops and a bio gas used to generate electricity, which is fed back into the National Grid.

**Find out more** For information about Merton waste and recycling services visit merton.gov.uk/recycling

**Merton Local Plan**

Merton Council is busy drawing up its new Local Plan – with help from residents. The Local Plan is the document which informs all future planning decisions made in the borough – when the council’s planning committee needs to decide whether to approve a proposal, this is the document it refers to for guidance.

The plan covers a range of topics that affect us all every day – from travel and transport to economic growth and the future of the high street. Its impact stretches from the appearance of the environment to protecting heritage buildings and from encouraging jobs to combating climate change. As such, decisions we make about the plan now will last for generations.

With a shortage of affordable homes such a big issue for London, housing is an important focus of the plan, which looks at where we should be building homes, and how we make them sustainable.

We have already been consulting on the plan, and you can read the things residents have been saying at merton.gov.uk/localplan.
Tackling knife crime together

Merton Council is working with the police to do all we can to prevent knife crime and the devastating consequences it can have for the whole community. My Merton finds out how everyone can help to protect vulnerable young people from being victims or perpetrators.

Knife crime is the subject of a major national debate. While Merton is one of the safest London boroughs, with far fewer incidents of knife crime than other in places, this is no reason to be complacent. The police and council are taking action to prevent, detect and deter knife crime but we need your help to protect those vulnerable to knife crime.

On 18 May, the police and council held a knife crime summit which brought together businesses, community groups and residents. It was an opportunity to find out more about action on knife crime, and to pledge your support. If you missed the event, here are some of the ways you can help:

If you’re a resident
If you have any information about knife crime, drug dealing or other gang-related activity in your area, please contact Crimestoppers – it is completely confidential.

Anyone concerned about crime can contact Victim Support, even if you haven’t been directly affected. For example, if you feel intimidated by people on your estate but don’t want to contact the police, Victim Support will give you practical advice about keeping safe.

If you run a business
Many young people join gangs because they are short of money or lacking opportunities. Could you help divert a young person from criminal activity by offering a job, apprenticeship or work experience? If so please contact Safer Merton to discuss. Email safer@merton.gov.uk

If you’re a community group
When an incident occurs, the partnership need trusted community groups, such as churches and youth centres, to help provide reassurance. We also need to know which groups are working to steer young people away from crime. Let us know how we can work together.

Neighbourhood Watch or similar
Neighbourhood Watch, friends of the parks and residents’ associations can help by conducting weapons sweeps. You will receive police training and support on the correct and safe way to conduct a sweep and you will be helping take dangerous weapons off the streets. Contact your police safer neighbourhood team to find out more.

If you’re a parent
Talk to your children about knife crime – if you are not sure how there is useful information on the Childline website. Any information your child has about local gangs and knife crime can be give anonymously to Crimestoppers or on the website fearless.org.

Find out more
Visit merton.gov.uk/safermerton. If you have information contact Crimestoppers at crimestoppers-uk.org or call 0800 555 111 – it’s 100% anonymous. For Victim Support call 020 7801 1777. To find your safer neighbourhood team visit met.police.uk/your-area. For Childline visit childline.org.uk

Speaker Christian Douglas from local organisation Unique Talent (second left) with young police cadets at Merton Knife Crime Conference
Merton boasts fantastic transport links which makes it a great place for families to live. My Merton finds out how a tube extension contributed to making our borough into the vibrant and well-connected place it is today.

This June marked 130 years since the District Line was extended to Wimbledon – a move which helped to shape the borough into the vibrant, well-connected place it is today. The development played a major role in turning the area into a popular place for people to live.

Covering 40 miles and serving 60 stations, the District Line is one of the London Underground’s most complex routes. You can travel east as far as Upminster or take one of the western branch lines to Wimbledon, Richmond, Ealing or Olympia.

By 1880 the West Brompton branch of the District Line had been extended to Putney. A further extension to Surbiton was planned, however, funding constraints persuaded the railway companies to choose Wimbledon as a suitable terminus.

On 3 June 1889 the District Railway opened the new extension from Putney Bridge to Wimbledon. Construction work had involved building a new bridge over the Thames, as well as stations at East Putney, Southfields and Wimbledon Park. Wimbledon Station was refurbished and further improvements followed in the 1920s, when Portland stone was used to create its now familiar grand facade.

The District Line features many different types of station architecture, from simple canopies to Art Deco structures. In keeping with their leafy surroundings, the new Wimbledon Park and Southfields stations were built in a cottage style, with pyramid roofs and small chimneys.

The extension of the London and South Western Railway to Wimbledon in 1938 had a dramatic effect on the town, making it an increasingly desirable place to live. Families moved to the area in droves as frequent trains made it easy to travel between leafy Surrey and the capital. The District Line compounded this effect, with new suburban housing built for City workers along its route. It also brought employment, schools and more facilities to serve the growing middle-class population.

Did you know?

A popular sight at Wimbledon station in the 1950s was Laddie, an Airedale terrier, who collected donations for a railwayman’s charity via a cashbox strapped to his back. After his death in 1960, Laddie was stuffed and returned to the station, where he stayed until the 1990s. He is now on display in the Science Museum.
Open your heart and home to change a child’s life

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 Coco Beanz Café, Morden on:
- 3 Jul at 10.30am
- 7 Aug at 10.30am
- 11 Sept at 10.30am
Or at Morden Baptist Church on:
- 25 Sept at 6.00pm

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

- English National Ballet School Summer Performance
  Thursday 4 July and Friday 5 July 7.30pm
  Come and see the stars of tomorrow! English National Ballet School’s talented young dancers will be showcasing their skills at the School’s annual Summer Performance. This magical programme will feature excerpts from the classic ballets Giselle and Paquita. English National Ballet School is a world-renowned specialist training centre for aspiring and highly talented young ballet dancers. Their mission is to nurture and develop the next generation of world-class dance artists.

- Fastlove – A Tribute to George Michael
  Saturday 6 July from 7.30pm
  A show to relive the passion, the flare and the unique sensitivty of global superstar George Michael. The show features all the hits and best-loved songs from Wham and George’s solo career including Careless Whisper, Freedom 90, Outside and Too Funky. The audience will be taken on a musical extravaganza, from the moving Jesus To A Child, to the celebration of Don’t Let The Sun Go Down On Me, to everyone’s favourites I’m Your Man and Wake Me Up. Catch this stunning stage show and respectful tribute to one of the greatest musicians of all time, which has been wowing audiences across the world.

- Ant Middleton – Mind Over Muscle
  Friday 13 September from 7pm
  Ant Middleton’s immersive show aims to recreate the conditions, and give insights, into the mental strength he needed to complete his recent SAS series and his huge Everest challenge. Ant draws upon his experiences of being the chief instructor for Channel 4’s hit shows, SAS: Who Dares Wins, Mutiny and Escape. The No. 1 Sunday Times Best Selling Author’s tour brings the ‘elements’ of his adventures to the audiences through lighting, sound and sets, and charts his motivational journey of self-help and self-discovery.

- Organ Recital
  Saturday 13 July from 7pm
  St Saviour’s Church, Grand Drive, Raynes Park. Organ recital by Theodore Frazer, sponsored by the UK Sibelius Society and featuring works by Jean Sibelius. Tickets £10; under 18s £1 on the door.

- Summer Light Watercolour Class
  Sunday 14 July from 10am until noon
  Morden Hall Park, Morden. Let nature stir your senses and creativity during this relaxing mindfulness-inspired class with Stefania Boiano, who exhibits and teaches nationally and internationally. All materials are provided. Suitable for both beginners and more experienced artists. Cost £25 per person. Find out more www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events

- English National Ballet School Summer Performance
  Thursday 4 July and Friday 5 July 7.30pm
  Come and see the stars of tomorrow! English National Ballet School’s talented young dancers will be showcasing their skills at the School’s annual Summer Performance. This magical programme will feature excerpts from the classic ballets Giselle and Paquita. English National Ballet School is a world-renowned specialist training centre for aspiring and highly talented young ballet dancers. Their mission is to nurture and develop the next generation of world-class dance artists.

- Fastlove – A Tribute to George Michael
  Saturday 6 July from 7.30pm
  A show to relive the passion, the flare and the unique sensitivty of global superstar George Michael. The show features all the hits and best-loved songs from Wham and George’s solo career including Careless Whisper, Freedom 90, Outside and Too Funky. The audience will be taken on a musical extravaganza, from the moving Jesus To A Child, to the celebration of Don’t Let The Sun Go Down On Me, to everyone’s favourites I’m Your Man and Wake Me Up. Catch this stunning stage show and respectful tribute to one of the greatest musicians of all time, which has been wowing audiences across the world.

- Ant Middleton – Mind Over Muscle
  Friday 13 September from 7pm
  Ant Middleton’s immersive show aims to recreate the conditions, and give insights, into the mental strength he needed to complete his recent SAS series and his huge Everest challenge. Ant draws upon his experiences of being the chief instructor for Channel 4’s hit shows, SAS: Who Dares Wins, Mutiny and Escape. The No. 1 Sunday Times Best Selling Author’s tour brings the ‘elements’ of his adventures to the audiences through lighting, sound and sets, and charts his motivational journey of self-help and self-discovery.

- Organ Recital
  Saturday 13 July from 7pm
  St Saviour’s Church, Grand Drive, Raynes Park. Organ recital by Theodore Frazer, sponsored by the UK Sibelius Society and featuring works by Jean Sibelius. Tickets £10; under 18s £1 on the door.

- Summer Light Watercolour Class
  Sunday 14 July from 10am until noon
  Morden Hall Park, Morden. Let nature stir your senses and creativity during this relaxing mindfulness-inspired class with Stefania Boiano, who exhibits and teaches nationally and internationally. All materials are provided. Suitable for both beginners and more experienced artists. Cost £25 per person. Find out more www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events

- English National Ballet School Summer Performance
  Thursday 4 July and Friday 5 July 7.30pm
  Come and see the stars of tomorrow! English National Ballet School’s talented young dancers will be showcasing their skills at the School’s annual Summer Performance. This magical programme will feature excerpts from the classic ballets Giselle and Paquita. English National Ballet School is a world-renowned specialist training centre for aspiring and highly talented young ballet dancers. Their mission is to nurture and develop the next generation of world-class dance artists.

- Fastlove – A Tribute to George Michael
  Saturday 6 July from 7.30pm
  A show to relive the passion, the flare and the unique sensitivty of global superstar George Michael. The show features all the hits and best-loved songs from Wham and George’s solo career including Careless Whisper, Freedom 90, Outside and Too Funky. The audience will be taken on a musical extravaganza, from the moving Jesus To A Child, to the celebration of Don’t Let The Sun Go Down On Me, to everyone’s favourites I’m Your Man and Wake Me Up. Catch this stunning stage show and respectful tribute to one of the greatest musicians of all time, which has been wowing audiences across the world.

- Ant Middleton – Mind Over Muscle
  Friday 13 September from 7pm
  Ant Middleton’s immersive show aims to recreate the conditions, and give insights, into the mental strength he needed to complete his recent SAS series and his huge Everest challenge. Ant draws upon his experiences of being the chief instructor for Channel 4’s hit shows, SAS: Who Dares Wins, Mutiny and Escape. The No. 1 Sunday Times Best Selling Author’s tour brings the ‘elements’ of his adventures to the audiences through lighting, sound and sets, and charts his motivational journey of self-help and self-discovery.

- Organ Recital
  Saturday 13 July from 7pm
  St Saviour’s Church, Grand Drive, Raynes Park. Organ recital by Theodore Frazer, sponsored by the UK Sibelius Society and featuring works by Jean Sibelius. Tickets £10; under 18s £1 on the door.

- Summer Light Watercolour Class
  Sunday 14 July from 10am until noon
  Morden Hall Park, Morden. Let nature stir your senses and creativity during this relaxing mindfulness-inspired class with Stefania Boiano, who exhibits and teaches nationally and internationally. All materials are provided. Suitable for both beginners and more experienced artists. Cost £25 per person. Find out more www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events

- English National Ballet School Summer Performance
  Thursday 4 July and Friday 5 July 7.30pm
  Come and see the stars of tomorrow! English National Ballet School’s talented young dancers will be showcasing their skills at the School’s annual Summer Performance. This magical programme will feature excerpts from the classic ballets Giselle and Paquita. English National Ballet School is a world-renowned specialist training centre for aspiring and highly talented young ballet dancers. Their mission is to nurture and develop the next generation of world-class dance artists.

- Fastlove – A Tribute to George Michael
  Saturday 6 July from 7.30pm
  A show to relive the passion, the flare and the unique sensitivty of global superstar George Michael. The show features all the hits and best-loved songs from Wham and George’s solo career including Careless Whisper, Freedom 90, Outside and Too Funky. The audience will be taken on a musical extravaganza, from the moving Jesus To A Child, to the celebration of Don’t Let The Sun Go Down On Me, to everyone’s favourites I’m Your Man and Wake Me Up. Catch this stunning stage show and respectful tribute to one of the greatest musicians of all time, which has been wowing audiences across the world.

- Ant Middleton – Mind Over Muscle
  Friday 13 September from 7pm
  Ant Middleton’s immersive show aims to recreate the conditions, and give insights, into the mental strength he needed to complete his recent SAS series and his huge Everest challenge. Ant draws upon his experiences of being the chief instructor for Channel 4’s hit shows, SAS: Who Dares Wins, Mutiny and Escape. The No. 1 Sunday Times Best Selling Author’s tour brings the ‘elements’ of his adventures to the audiences through lighting, sound and sets, and charts his motivational journey of self-help and self-discovery.

- Organ Recital
  Saturday 13 July from 7pm
  St Saviour’s Church, Grand Drive, Raynes Park. Organ recital by Theodore Frazer, sponsored by the UK Sibelius Society and featuring works by Jean Sibelius. Tickets £10; under 18s £1 on the door. Find out more www.stssaviour.net

- Summer Light Watercolour Class
  Sunday 14 July from 10am until noon
  Morden Hall Park, Morden. Let nature stir your senses and creativity during this relaxing mindfulness-inspired class with Stefania Boiano, who exhibits and teaches nationally and internationally. All materials are provided. Suitable for both beginners and more experienced artists. Cost £25 per person. Find out more www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events

- Blithe Spirit
  Wednesday 17 until Saturday 20 July
  St Barnabas Church, 146 Lavenham Road, Southfields SW18 5EP. Southfields Theatre Group presents Noël Coward’s witty play. Blithe Spirit tells the story of a writer >>
Space adventures to inspire reading

The first moon landing and a thrilling mission to stop aliens nabbing books are set to inspire youngsters to read more books this summer.

All Merton libraries are running The Summer Reading Challenge to encourage children aged four to 11 to read six library books over the school holiday.

This year the theme is Space Chase to mark the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. Children taking part in the challenge will be able to join super space family, The Rockets, for a thrilling mission to track down books nabbed by mischievous aliens.

All primary children can take part in the free challenge and they can read whatever they like including story, fact packed, picture or audio books – just as long as they are borrowed from one of the libraries

Children will get rewards when they finish each book and a certificate if they complete the challenge. Merton Libraries will also enter the children who complete the challenge into a prize draw.

Teenage volunteers needed for the mission

Teens, aged 14 and above, are being sought to help support children taking part in the challenge and get involved in the events. Volunteers can sign up at local libraries or by enquiring online via the libraries website.

The cast of Midsummer Night's Dream

who hosts a séance with the eccentric medium Madame Arcarti.

Little do they know they will be haunted by the ghost of an old flame that wreaks havoc. Evening performances every day from 7.45pm, plus a matinee show on Saturday at 3pm. Tickets £14 or £10 for concessions.

find out more
www.southfieldstheatregroup.org.uk

Star Flower – Outdoor Acrobatic Family Theatre

Friday 2 until Monday 5 August. Shows at 11.30am, 2.30pm, Morden Hall Park, Morden Hall Road.

A magical performance of aerial acrobatics, live music and storytelling in the rose garden. Star Flower is an immersive show created by award-winning company Whispering Woods.

Perfect for the whole family. Tickets: adult £12; child £9; under twos free.

find out more
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Midsummer Night’s Dream

Friday 16 August from 7.30pm, Morden Hall Park, Morden Hall Road.


find out more
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Merton’s libraries

The first moon landing and a thrilling mission to stop aliens nabbing books are set to inspire youngsters to read more books this summer.

All Merton libraries are running The Summer Reading Challenge to encourage children aged four to 11 to read six library books over the school holiday.

This year the theme is Space Chase to mark the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. Children taking part in the challenge will be able to join super space family, The Rockets, for a thrilling mission to track down books nabbed by mischievous aliens.

All primary children can take part in the free challenge and they can read whatever they like including story, fact packed, picture or audio books – just as long as they are borrowed from one of the libraries

Children will get rewards when they finish each book and a certificate if they complete the challenge. Merton Libraries will also enter the children who complete the challenge into a prize draw.

Teenage volunteers needed for the mission

Teens, aged 14 and above, are being sought to help support children taking part in the challenge and get involved in the events. Volunteers can sign up at local libraries or by enquiring online via the libraries website.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/libraries
Harvest Celebration and Race Night
Saturday 21 September from 7.30pm
St Saviour’s Church Hall, Grand Drive, Raynes Park. Harvest Supper followed by well-loved hobby horse racing event. Suitable for all the family. Tickets £6. find out more www.stssaviour.net

Family
Bee Keeping
Sunday 7 July from 10am until noon
Youngsters can learn how to put a bee hive together and make a beeswax candle to take home at this event run by Wimbledon Common Nature Club. Suitable for children aged six to 14-years-old. Meet at the Information Centre, Wimbledon Common. Tickets £2 per child. find out more www.wimbledoncommonnatureclub.wordpress.com

Raynes Lark in the Park
Saturday 7 July from 12.30 until 4.30pm
Holland Gardens, Cambridge Road SW20 OSN. Annual celebration to bring the whole community together. Everyone invited to bring a picnic and enjoy the entertainment, which will include African acrobatics and drumming with Mbilla Arts, Indian dancing, Siegeris Dance, football with Free Range Kids, Swing Dance workshop with Swing State London, parachute games, art activities, bouncy castle, refreshments provided by the 19th Wimbledon Scouts and much more. Free to enter. find out more www.myraynespark.co.uk/sessions/raynes-lark-in-the-park-2/

Magical Quests Summer Camp
Monday 29 July until Friday 2 August, from 9am until 4pm
Children will be transported to a host of different worlds and magical lands at this very special summer camp. Wimbledon Library’s drama, music and arts summer camp is suitable for all children, aged seven to 12, including those with hearing impairments or mild learning difficulties. Makaton, SSE and BSL trained staff will be on hand to give children any support they need. Each day the children will take a sensory, musical journey to places ranging from Robin Hood’s Medieval England to Aladdin’s Arabia and Mowgli’s Jungle! The course will help children to:
• Build confidence, self-esteem and learn new skills.
• Develop a love of performance and creativity.
• Make new friends and have lots of fun.
Places cost £150 for the full week; £100 for three days or £40 per single day booking. *Funding and sponsored places available for those needing financial assistance.
find out more For further programme information and to book, contact: Jessica Kingsley mail@magicalquests.com

Polka40
To celebrate forty years of entertaining families, Polka Theatre is to stage events at Morden Hall Park this summer. The well-loved theatre has temporarily moved out of its home while its new building is being created.
Free events for Polka40 include a hands-on exhibition, a woodland craft and storytelling picnic and a chance for everyone to get together to share tales on the theatre’s amazing history. There is also a whole host of paid for drama and art workshops as well as storytelling events, for children aged four to 11.

Celebrating 40 years of Polka
Tuesday 16 July until Friday 2 August from 10am to 4pm daily
Travel through 40 years of Polka Theatre history and get close to props, costumes and other gems. The show is to run from Tuesday 16 July until Friday 2 August and open from 10am to 4pm daily.

Polka40: In Conversation with...
Sunday 21 July from 11am until 12.30pm
People from Polka’s past and present will come together to share tales and gossip from over the years.

Woodland crafts and storytelling picnic
Sunday 28 July from 11am until 4pm
Everyone and their teddies are invited to bring a picnic and enjoy this free event on Sunday 28 July from 11am until 4pm.
find out more www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park
The Great Big Tree Climb
Wednesday 24 July and 21 August from 10am to 5pm
For the first time ever people can climb the tallest, oldest tree in Morden Hall Park. Instructors from the Big Tree Company are to show children and adults how to safely climb into the canopy of the park’s tallest London plane tree. Tickets cost £25 per hour. Booking essential for the event in the grounds off London Road, Morden.

Deen City Farm Summer Extravaganza
Saturday 13 July
A fun day featuring fairground rides, a bouncy castle, crafts and games. Also a great chance to enjoy the usual attractions including the animals, pony rides, playground and café. Free event at Deen City Farm in Windsor Avenue, Merton Abbey.

Making Natural Paintbrushes
Sunday 4 August from 10am until noon
Children will learn how to make their own natural paintbrushes from twigs and leaves. Workshop run by Wimbledon Common Nature Club. Suitable for ages six to 14 years. Tickets £2 per child. Meet at the Information Centre, Wimbledon Common.

Mini den building
Sunday 1 September from 10am until noon
Youngsters can make a den for mini beasts and one for themselves. Run by Wimbledon Common Nature Club. Meet at the Information Centre, Wimbledon Common. Tickets £2 per child.

Deen City Farm Summer Extravaganza
Saturday 13 July
A fun day featuring fairground rides, a bouncy castle, crafts and games. Also a great chance to enjoy the usual attractions including the animals, pony rides, playground and café. Free event at Deen City Farm in Windsor Avenue, Merton Abbey.

Fairs and markets
Merton Food and Drink Festival 2019
Sunday 14 July from 11am until 7pm
This free-to-enter celebration is to showcase food and drink from local producers, ranging from street food vendors and artisan bakers to gin distillers and craft beer makers. A range of market stalls and hot food providers will be lining the beautiful walled garden of the house in London Road, Morden.

Mayor’s Charity Cricket Match
Sunday 28 July
The Mayor is raising a team to play against Mitcham Cricket Club. The team is set to include councillors from all political groups across the council.

Mayor’s Christmas Dinner
Saturday 30 November
Tickets can now be purchased for the fundraising event which is being held at The Wimbledon Club, Church Road in Wimbledon.

To book tickets, please contact the Mayor’s office by emailing mayor@merton.gov.uk or call 020 8545 3517.
Morden Hall
Park Summer Fair
Saturday 20 and
Sunday 21 July from 10am until 7pm
London Road, Morden. Oakleigh Fairs are to return, bringing a host of fun activities for all the family including animal shows, craft stalls and food vendors. Now in its ninth year, this family country fair aims to have something for everyone to enjoy. Tickets: adults £7.50; concessions £6, child £3 and under fives free. Family tickets also available.

Merton Fayre 2019
21st & 22nd September
Wimbledon, SW19 8AU
www.classicfestivals.co.uk

Wimbledon Fayre
Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September from 11am
Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon. A two-day show packed with attractions including Jonathan Marshall, the famed horse stuntman from Poldark and Game of Thrones, heavy horse displays, motorbike stunt teams, falconry displays and Britain’s Got Talent Dima and his dogs. Also cooking demonstrations, a dog show and children’s area with Gemma’ Petting Farm and Punch and Judy as well as live music and performances. Tickets:

Online tennis court booking roll out
A new booking scheme to enable residents to make the best of the borough’s tennis courts is being rolled out this summer. As part of the Clubspark scheme to encourage Merton residents to play more tennis, there is to be free open days at the courts and a special affordable summer holiday course for children. The new online system to book courts has been launched at the tennis courts in Wimbledon Park and is set to go live for those in Durnondal Park, Joseph Hood Recreation Park and John Innes Park this month. Under the Clubspark new court entry systems will be introduced and players will be given unique codes to get access when they book a slot. The scheme is being served up by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), which is the national governing body for tennis, and Idverde, which manages the borough’s parks.

Find out more
www.classicfestivals.co.uk

Middle Sunday
Opened Up
Sunday 7 July, 10am until 4pm
Wimbledon Park. Judy Murray is to be among the top coaches offering free coaching sessions at this community tennis festival. The free event is being staged by organisers of the Wimbledon Championships – the All England Lawn Tennis Club in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association.

Find out more
middlesunday.org

Car Boot Sale
with Table Top Sale
Saturday 7 September from 9.30am
St Saviour’s Church Hall, Grand Drive, Raynes Park.

Find out more
www.stsaviour.net

Mum2mum Market
Saturday 14 September from 10am until noon
Ricards Lodge High School, Lake Road, Wimbledon. Buy top-quality second-hand baby and children’s clothes, toys books and equipment at this award-winning pop-up market, which is to bring together 40 sellers under one roof. Entrance £2 and children go free. Stalls must be booked in advance.

Find out more
www.mum2mummarket.co.uk

Health

Online tennis court booking roll out
A new booking scheme to enable residents to make the best of the borough’s tennis courts is being rolled out this summer. As part of the Clubspark scheme to encourage Merton residents to play more tennis, there is to be free open days at the courts and a special affordable summer holiday course for children aged four to eleven offering a free tennis racket and personalised T-shirt to those who sign up. To book places visit Tennisforkids.co.uk

Wimbledon Fayre
Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 September from 11am
Wimbledon Park, Wimbledon. A two-day show packed with attractions including Jonathan Marshall, the famed horse stuntman from Poldark and Game of Thrones, heavy horse displays, motorbike stunt teams, falconry displays and Britain’s Got Talent Dima and his dogs. Also cooking demonstrations, a dog show and children’s area with Gemma’ Petting Farm and Punch and Judy as well as live music and performances. Tickets:

Tennis for Kids
Low cost tennis course

Find out more
www.classicfestivals.co.uk

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 and the issues raised will be followed up by the relevant organisations.

Raynes Park
Thursday 19 September, 7.15pm
Raynes Park Library Hall, Approach Road, Raynes Park

Wimbledon
Wednesday 25 September, 7.15pm
Merton Arts Space, Wimbledon Library, 35 Wimbledon Hill Road SW19 7NB

Find out more
merton.gov.uk/communityforums
Tune in and get fit with Jah Wobble

Every Monday from 7pm
Tuned In is a weekly free drop in session, which aims to help people overcome social isolation and by playing music together. It’s a great opportunity to jam with acclaimed musician Jah Wobble. Instruments will be provided but participants are welcome to bring their own. There will also be exercise sessions run by Fulham FC and AFC Wimbledon and a chance to just chill out and meet like-minded people. Participants will be required to fill in a short registration questionnaire to take part in Tuned In. All responses will be kept confidential.

find out more merton.gov.uk/artsspace

Merton’s Dementia Action Alliance’s annual meeting
Wednesday 3 July from 9.30am until noon
Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane. Residents invited to attend this round-up of all the action taken to improve the lives of people living with dementia in Merton. Guest speakers are to reflect on the alliance’s successes over the past year, which includes formal recognition by the Alzheimer’s Society on work to make the borough more dementia friendly. Attendees can comment on the alliance’s proposed priorities for the upcoming year and enjoy networking. Come along and help make Merton a more dementia friendly community.

(find out more contact the Dementia lead for Merton by emailing patrick.gray@alzheimers.org.uk

Youth people

Young men’s inspirational residential course
Pollards Hill Youth Centre, South Lodge Avenue CR4 1LT. Workshops for young men aged 13 to 16 on personal development and well-being, featuring discussions and public speaking training. Cost £70 per attendee.

(find out more 020 8274 5195/4 or 07904 237292

(find out more merton.gov.uk/youthcentres
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. That’s just £2.88 per collection!

Visit merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 020 8274 4902 for details and to sign up.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Matt Breckon is the assistant manager at Morden Leisure Centre, overseeing everything from membership sales to managing the lifeguard team. He started the job a year ago after completing a graduate trainee scheme, and has been part of the transition to the new building, which opened in November. As Matt explains, the community really has embraced their new facilities.

Tell us more about the new leisure centre?
We’ve got a great team, who are really motivated. We were all excited to move over to the new centre. In terms of facilities, we have an amazing movable floor in the secondary pool. The floor moves up and down so we can use it for diving and children’s lessons too. We have a 100-station gym with great views – you can see the whole of London while you’re working out.

What’s the most rewarding part of the job?
Seeing the impact on the local community— we’ve grown so much in six months and attracted people who wouldn’t have come to a gym before. It’s fantastic to see people achieve their goals at the centre. We’re very much part of the community and accessible to anyone.

What’s your advice for people starting to exercise?
With our new studio, we’ve grown our timetable of classes massively. My best advice is to start with our classes. We have a variety for all ages and levels of ability, with some women-only. A good one would be Zumba, which is not too hard on the joints.

find out more
better.org.uk/morden-leisure-centre