news and information from your council

How will YOU champion clean air and tidy streets?
Together our small changes will make a big difference

See the back page for your Christmas recycling and rubbish collection days

Win a family ticket to Cinderella at New Wimbledon Theatre

ISSUE 80
WINTER 2019/20
Friends of the Earth has ranked Merton as the joint second London borough, and among the top authorities in the UK, for action on climate change. It is very encouraging to receive this recognition for the steps the council is taking to make the borough cleaner, greener and healthier for everyone.

Earlier this year, the council declared a climate change emergency – a commitment to combat carbon emissions and rising temperatures. The aim is for the council, as an organisation, to achieve carbon neutrality within 12 years and we are committed to working with residents and businesses to make the whole borough carbon neutral by 2050.

There is still an incredible amount to do and we all have our part to play. To mark the start of the new decade, the council is launching the clean air challenge, which encourages everyone to make three small lifestyle changes, which benefit the environment as well as our health. As a keen cyclist, one of my three pledges for 2020 will be to make more journeys by bike, rather than driving.

Improving air quality is a top priority for the community champions, who feature in this edition, and we also report on World Car Free Day, which brought neighbours together to create play streets.

When ranking local authorities, Friends of the Earth also took into account recycling rates. In Merton, recycling is at a record level, thanks to the continued efforts of residents to reduce the amount of rubbish produced and recycling more. This edition has some top tips for an eco-friendly Christmas, plus details of the revised recycling and rubbish collections over the festive season. I would like to wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Ged Curran
Chief Executive

Queen’s visit brings crowds

Crowds turned out to welcome the Queen when she visited Merton to open one of the country’s largest new housing schemes for veterans.

Her Majesty visited the borough in October to open 68 new homes at Haig Housing’s headquarters in Morden, for ex-military personnel and their families.

The scheme consists of seven blocks, which are named after the Queen, five Victoria and George gallantry recipients, and one in tribute to the late Councillor Maxi Martin.

Cllr Martin, who sadly passed away three years ago, represented St Helier Ward, where the Haig Housing estate is located, for 18 years. The councillor, who was Merton’s first Armed Forces Champion, was a stalwart supporter of Haig Housing and the borough’s veteran community.

Haig Housing Chief Executive, Brigadier James Richardson, said, “We were delighted to welcome our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen, to open this inspiring new development of homes for veterans and their families. The development raises the bar and sets new standards fit for those who have served their country and, often, risked all.”

Haig Housing has been the UK’s main provider of homes for Veterans and their families for more than 100 years. The development, with one to four-bedroomed homes, has been built for the future and includes solar panelling and vehicle electric re-charging facilities.
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Sweet success  

Cover photo: Sustainable Merton Community Champion Ellie Smallshaw
The winners of the seventh Merton Best Business Awards were revealed at a glittering gala evening at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon.

The prestigious awards celebrate the achievements of the borough’s businesses and entrepreneurs and aim to highlight that Merton is a great place to do business.

Incredibly, there were 150 entries this year to the 16 categories, which covered all sizes of businesses and recognised attributes such as giving exceptional customer service, looking after employees and making a difference in the community.

The awards ceremony, on Thursday 26 September, was hosted by sports broadcaster Laura Woods and attended by awards finalists, judges and sponsors. Merton Council sponsored two of the 16 award categories. These were Best Medium Business category, which was won by Gina Conway Salon & Spa and Entrepreneur of the Year, which was scooped by RyGas Ltd. Gina Conway Salon and Spa was also crowned the overall winner of this year’s awards.

TheLet’s Learn English Together service aims to help residents, for whom English is not their first language, to access the free English classes they need.

The initiative has been launched to help people with low levels of English overcome the challenges they face to learn the language.

Free sessions are being held to flag up the different options to learn English, which vary from one-to-one home tutoring to formal college classes.

The weekly drop-ins are now being held, from 11am until noon, at the following locations: Mondays – St Marks Community Centre, 28 St Mark’s Road, Mitcham; Wednesdays – Wimbledon library; Thursdays – Colliers Wood library.

Children at a Morden primary school have been enjoying an amazing new play area.

The impressive refurbishment of Aragon Primary School’s Early Years and Foundation play area was officially opened in September. The school’s nursery and reception class children have been enjoying all the wonderful, different themed areas. The school has welcomed the development, which boosts the opportunities for children to reap the physical and mental benefits from outdoor learning. Parents and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) have been thanked by Aragan Primary School for their sterling fundraising efforts for the play area.
Cleaning up our streets

Enforcement officers are investigating and prosecuting people who dump their rubbish on the street.

As part of a major crack down on fly-tipping, photographs of officers carrying out their daily work to rid the streets of fly-tips were released. The council is warning that officers are proactively investigating the source of fly-tips and they will prosecute offenders. Fly-tipping is a serious criminal offence and anyone who dumps rubbish in Merton faces a £400 on-the-spot fine, or, if prosecuted, fines of many thousands of pounds or even a prison sentence.

The council have also teamed up with Merton Police to catch vehicles suspected of being involved in fly-tipping. Operations have resulted in vans being seized and drivers being ordered to produce waste carrying licences.

Two-thirds of fly-tips in Merton are made up of household waste, so residents are being reminded that they are responsible for disposing of their rubbish correctly. Bags of rubbish dumped next to public litter bins is fly-tipping and it often leads to a chain reaction of other items being added.

Every year the council spends more than £650,000 just to clear away fly-tips.

This is council tax payers’ cash, which could be spent on vital services such as adult social care and children’s services.

Residents can play a key role by reporting fly-tips and any information about fly-tippers by visiting: merton.gov.uk/flytipping

To book collections of bulky items, which, in line with most other London boroughs, is chargeable, visit: merton.gov.uk/bulky

Residents can also dispose of bulky household items for free by taking them to Garth Road Reuse and Recycling Centre in Morden (SM4 4AX).

EU Settlement Scheme

Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth (CAML) are running a free service for European Union (EU) nationals, and those concerned about their residency status after the UK leaves the EU.

The specialist service, open to all Merton residents, offers advice on making applications for settled status, assistance with appeals and support for complex cases. Merton Council allocated funding to the scheme from its Brexit fund, given by the Government, due to concerns that some residents may struggle to get their applications approved.

EU nationals need to be aware that the deadline to apply for settled status is 30 June 2021 if the UK leaves with a deal. However, if the country leaves without a deal, the deadline for applications will be 31 December 2020.

find out more merton.gov.uk/brexit

Holocaust Memorial Day

Merton’s Holocaust Memorial Day event will be held on Tuesday 21 January in the Council Chamber from 7pm to 9pm. Members of the public are invited to attend this free event.

Holocaust Memorial Day, held in January each year, is the international day of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides. It aims to educate, commemorate and prompt action against discrimination and hatred in our communities today. An exhibition displaying information about the Holocaust and other genocides will be on display in the reception at the civic centre. For further information, visit: merton.gov.uk/holocaustmemorialday
New parking charges

Following further consultation, the council agreed to introduce a new parking charges system, as part of its drive to improve air quality and public health.

The new charges will apply to controlled parking zones, public car parks, on street parking and parking permits. The new parking charges are due to come into force over the winter. Motorists are advised to check the council’s website for updates.

Income from parking charges can only be spent on running the parking service, road maintenance work and funding Freedom Pass. For more information visit merton.gov.uk/parking

Silver landmark for Fairtrade

25 years of the Fairtrade Mark and work by the charity to tackle poverty and improve the lives of farmers and workers was celebrated in Merton. The Mayor of Merton, Councillor Janice Howard hosted an event to celebrate the achievements of the Fairtrade Mark internationally and locally. Merton Council is proud to have also recently reconfirmed its status as a Fairtrade Borough for the next two years.

Children from St John Fisher School and representatives of the All England Lawn Tennis Club and the Polka Theatre joined the Fairtrade Merton Steering Group to celebrate the charity’s landmark in October. Schools, organisations and businesses, from across the borough, were thanked for their contribution to Merton’s Fairtrade Borough work. Some key campaigns were recalled at the event, including the participation of Merton schools in the charity’s Guinness Book of Records successful bid for the world’s longest bunting. The event highlighted that Merton’s commitment to Fairtrade is still vital as hundreds of millions of people in food supply chains across the world are earning less than living wages for their labour.

Merton has been a Fairtrade Borough since 2009 and ethical shopping is promoted locally by the Fairtrade Merton steering group whose mission statement is: Fairtrade Merton: small change locally, lives changed globally.

Courses for work, life and wellbeing

Distance Learning Courses

FREE short courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications which you can study in your own time.

We have a range of short distance learning courses from the awarding body NCFE, which can be completed in 4 – 8 weeks. These are fully funded, meaning there is no cost to the learner. On completion you will gain a nationally recognised Level 2 qualification.

Courses on offer include:
- Understand Specific Learning Difficulties
- Understanding Autism
- Understanding Behaviour that Challenges
- Understanding Children and Young People’s Mental Health
- Understanding Common Childhood Illnesses
- Understanding Nutrition and Health
- Understanding Safeguarding and Prevent
- Equality and Diversity

Eligibility

Lived in the EU for three years and aged 19+. You will need to be confident with written English in order to meet the required standards. For further information about the courses or enrolling, please contact martina.collett@stcg.ac.uk (020 8408 6620) or book your assessment via the website at merton.ac.uk/distance-learning

Merton Adult Education

Learn something new with one of our exciting Adult Education courses.

A wide range of subject areas are on offer, including:
- Business
- Cake Decorating and Cookery
- Childcare and Health Care
- Computing and IT
- Creative Arts
- Hair and Complementary Therapy
- Languages
- Music
- Musical Instrument Making and Repair
- Teaching and Training
- Training for Work
- Wellbeing

Courses that fit around your lifestyle and working day, including Saturday courses. The quickest way to enrol is online, but you can also enrol by phone or in person. Whichever way you enrol you will need to show proof of your identity to complete your enrolment. Suitable ID includes a passport, birth certificate, driving licence or Freedom Pass. For the latest course information, check our website merton.ac.uk.
Car Free Day community fun

Residents of all ages had fun at a play space which popped up outside Morden Tube Station for World Car Free Day.

The bus-stand was transformed into a Play Street as part of the council’s action to improve air quality across the borough. Attendees at the event on Sunday 22 September enjoyed the bouncy castle, space hoppers and getting artistic with coloured chalks. Many people took the chance to have their cycles mended for free by Dr Bike and had a pedal on a bike to create the energy for a smoothie drink.

Other residents relaxed in the striped deckchairs set out on the temporary artificial grass on the day.

Children also played in the streets at Play Street events, which were organised by groups of neighbours across the borough. The council actively encouraged residents to reclaim the streets from the domination of cars by waiving the fees for temporary street closures. The annual World Car Free Day flags up the dangers of toxic air from vehicles and encourages everyone to leave the car at home and make their journeys by foot, bike or public transport.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/playstreets

Big thanks to charity supporters

Bethel United Church of Jesus Christ (Apostolic) have expressed their huge gratitude to all residents and businesses who helped make their afternoon tea party, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, such a great success. More than £2,000 was raised for the charity at the event, held on Sunday 7 July at the church in Kohat Road, Wimbledon.

Milestone for scouts who built their own home

A scout group famed for building their own headquarters has celebrated its 90th anniversary. Members past and present got together to celebrate the history and future of 1st Morden Scouts. The thriving group were thrilled to receive congratulations on their milestone from national scout ambassador Steve Backshall, who wished them a happy anniversary on his webchat.

The scout pack hit the headlines in the 1960s for not only raising the cash for their new club house in Central Road, but also designing and building it. Local newspapers reported the staggering statistics involved in the project, which included 14,500 hours of fundraising for the £1,600 needed for materials and 5,000 hours of construction work.

The then Mayor of Merton, Councillor Cyril Marsh, opened the new scout headquarters on 11 September 1965.

Based in the heart of the St Helier Estate, the group has forged strong links with the community over the past nine decades. Many former scouts, beavers and cubs from the area joined the celebrations of the club’s history and its future. Attractions at the event on Saturday 21 September, at the headquarters in Central Road, featured camp food, a barbecue as well as a ‘monkey bridge’ and bouncy castle.

New members to the scout, cub and beaver groups are welcome, for information email 1st.mordenscouts@gmail.com

General election

The deadlines to register to vote and to apply for a postal vote are both on 26 November.

Applications for proxy votes must be received by 4 December.

find out more
merton.gov.uk/voting

Thursday 12 December

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A thriving women’s group which formed when Morden was a small rural village celebrated its centenary in style.

Guests at the lunch to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Morden Women’s Institute (WI) included the Mayor of Merton Councillor Janice Howard and the chairwoman of the Surrey Federation of Women’s Institutes, Dr Carol Gartrell.

More than 80 guests attended the centenary event, held on Tuesday 10 September at St Bede’s Conference Centre in North Cheam. The group’s handmade banner, completed in 1931, had pride of place at the lunch, alongside the beautifully crafted birthday cake.

The group recalled some highlights of its history, including a 1920s fundraiser for which each member brought in a cup and saucer, which they hired out at a charge of sixpence a dozen. The group’s meetings, which in the early years, featured craft and domestic skills, now include talks on a very wide range of subjects.

Nationally, the WI, which has a long history of social campaigning and of empowering women to play a role in public life, celebrated its centenary in 2015.

Morden WI currently has around 70 members and everyone is welcome to pop in to their meetings, which are held on the second Tuesday of the month at the Parish Hall in Central Road, 2pm to 4pm.

Bowls club on a roll for its 110th year

Members of Wimbledon Park Bowls Club are celebrating one of the club’s most successful seasons ever. The club notched up the Surrey Senior Men’s Fours title and a top 16 finish at the National Championships, in addition to great success for six of its bowlers at the Wimbledon and District Bowls Association finals.

Club members Barry Willingham, Richard Simioni and Neil Winter won the men’s triples, with Barry and Neil taking the men’s pairs and Neil completing the hat-trick by winning the men’s singles. Claire Tomkin, George Dima, Sabrina Dima and Martin Jewitt were runners-up in the district mixed fours competition, with Sabrina also Runner-Up in the ladies singles and Neil runner up in the mixed singles.

The club concluded its season by scooping the Wimbledon District League title.

Listening to young voices on hate

Secondary school pupils and sixth formers came together at the launch of Merton’s Hate Crime Awareness Week.

The launch of the week, themed Hate Crime Matters: Your Voice, Your Experience was held at Merton College on Monday 14 October.

The event was held to enable young people to come together to find out more about hate crime and to share their views on how best to engage youngsters on the issues involved.

Safer Merton recognises that younger residents across the borough are those most likely to suffer hate crime, which can include abuse due to race, religion, disability or sexual orientation. This launch was a great opportunity to listen to young people’s voices and spread the message that Merton is a place where hate crime is not tolerated in any form.
Merton joint second ‘climate-friendly’

Merton Council was ranked joint second in London and among the top authorities across the country by Friends of the Earth for its climate change work. Research by the global environment group, gave Merton a performance rating of 80 per cent for work in response to the climate change emergency.

Friends of the Earth assessed all councils in a number of categories including renewable energy, public transport, lift sharing, energy efficiency, waste recycling and tree cover. However the Council recognises there is much more work to do to prevent a climate catastrophe.

In July, the council unanimously agreed to declare a Climate Change Emergency and pledged to achieve carbon neutrality for the whole of Merton by 2050 and to make every effort for the council to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. For information on how everyone can get involved visit merton.gov.uk/climatechange

Merton Giving Week

A charity dedicated to helping local causes and tackling inequality in Merton is to hold a fundraising week to mark its first birthday. Merton Giving is celebrating receiving donations of cash, time and support worth more than £60,000 from its business backers, in its first year. Everyone is now invited to take part in Merton Giving Week, which is to run from Monday 2 December until Sunday 8 December.

The charity, run by Merton Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Merton Voluntary Services Council, is supported by Merton Council. In the past year, it allocated small grants to 20 charities including the Young at Heart Club, a volunteer led lunch club in Figges Marsh.

Funding was also granted to Hearts and Minds, to help fund weekly sessions for young people aged 14–25 experiencing mental health difficulties.

Peacock and Co solicitors has committed to making Merton Giving their charity of the year for 2020. And they will be waiving their fee in exchange for donations to Merton Giving.

Like to share Merton’s heritage?

There’s some great new opportunities for people fascinated by local history to develop their skills and be part of a creative project to enhance the lives of others.

Merton Heritage Centre is seeking volunteers to work on two projects designed to increase learning, interaction and cultural access for people with particular needs. The projects are The Merton Memory Bank for residents living with dementia and the Common Sense project which aims to make local heritage more accessible for people with visual and hearing impairments.

Volunteers for the Merton Memory Bank will help devise and run reminiscence sessions to encourage older residents to share their memories. Those working on the Common Sense project will create sensory material and heritage themed activities for people in care homes, day centres and residential units. All volunteers will be trained as dementia friends and will also be given visual, deaf and autism awareness training, as well as guidance in local history research, display work, publicity and outreach work.

Merton Heritage Centre would ideally like volunteers to work half or full day shifts once or twice a week. Interested? Email: dorian.knight@merton.gov.uk or sarah.gould@merton.gov.uk

A roof for all

To mark its fifth anniversary and to capitalise on the attention garnered by No.1 Court’s new roof, the Wimbledon Foundation partnered with the London Community Foundation to create a new fund to help combat homelessness.

The fund, which was the beneficiary of an online auction and a proportion of ticket proceeds from No.1 Court’s celebratory opening event, is providing multi-year grants to five homelessness charities operating in Merton and Wandsworth.

Funding of more than £400,000 has been committed to Ace of Clubs, Glass Door Homeless Charity, SPEAR Housing, The Spires Centre and Western Lodge over three years. Further funds raised have been set aside for pan-London homeless charities with a focus on young people and employability schemes. To find out more about the work of the Wimbledon Foundation, visit wimbledon.com/foundation
Making Merton safer

Enforcement in action

Merton Council is committed to taking a tough approach when it comes to protecting residents from rogue landlords and traders. Whether making sure that homes for rent are safe and decent, checking that food premises meet hygiene standards or protecting vulnerable people from scams, our enforcement officers will investigate and seek to prosecute the perpetrators.

Protecting tenants from rogue landlords

Around a quarter of homes in Merton are privately rented. While the vast majority meet the high standards we’d all look for in a place to live, others fail to come up to scratch.

Where rental homes aren’t fit places for tenants to live, the council has the powers to prosecute landlords or impose a fine, under the Housing Act 2004. Landlords who have been convicted of an offence can also be banned from renting properties and added to a national database.

The Council is committed to using all enforcement powers available to clamp down on rogue landlords who are not meeting their legal obligations to their tenants.

Earlier this year, the council’s cabinet agreed to implement new legal powers, which would further help to prevent landlords from letting out unsuitable or dangerous properties.

We are also considering if there is a case to develop a selective licensing scheme for private sector landlords. It would operate in areas of the borough where there is a high concentration of rental homes and where residents are concerned about anti-social behaviour and crime. The scheme would require landlords in the designated area to comply with the licence conditions, which would include obligations for both landlord and tenant.

Following a change in the law in 2018, all landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) must apply for a licence where five or more unrelated tenants rent rooms and share a kitchen or bathroom within a single property. Failing to do so is an offence.

The council has successfully prosecuted two rogue landlords, for failing to licence an HMO, in the last three months.

A retired GP who operated an illegal HMO, with up to nine tenants, was ordered to pay a total of £6,780.50. Dr Mohammad Abdus Samad, from Sutton, pleaded guilty to failing to register a HMO and four other related charges, at Lavender Hill Magistrates Court in Battersea in October.

The 75-year-old faced charges in relation to a two-storey property he rents out Clive Road, Colliers Wood. The semi-detached home, with four upstairs bedrooms and three reception rooms on the ground floor converted to bedrooms, housed up to nine tenants. An investigation revealed the property did not have fire alarms and the shared facilities were badly maintained.

In August Fouad Ahmad, from Streatham, was ordered by the same court to pay £4,000 for failing to obtain an HMO licence. He was prosecuted following a tip-off expressing concern about the two-storey house he rented out in Mitcham.

Test purchases reveal knife sales to underage children

With knife crime such a concern in London, trading standards officers have made tackling illegal sales to young people a priority.

Officers visit the borough’s retailers to discuss best practice around the sale of knives and provide practical advice. Businesses are encouraged to request age-verifying identification from all customers who they believe to be under-25.

The advice is followed by test purchasing at random points within a three-month period, using young people aged-under 18, who are closely supervised by trading standards officers. Over the past two years, three retailers have been caught attempting to sell knives during the operations.

Similar test purchase work is carried out for other banned items including alcohol, cigarettes and fireworks.
Could you be a Community Champion?

Many residents share Merton Council’s key priority to make the borough a greener and healthy place for everyone to enjoy. *My Merton* meets a group of residents who are taking practical steps to enhance the borough.

For Ellie Smallshaw from Raynes Park, becoming a Sustainable Merton Community Champion was the natural progression from a concern about the future of our planet. “Having studied geography at university, I have always had an interest in the natural world and a strong desire to respect and protect it, now and for future generations,” she said.

“Being a Community Champion allows me to make a positive difference to our local environment in a collaborative way with others – including my young family.” If you’d like to do something positive to combat the threats to our planet – whether climate change, plastic in the oceans, mounting food waste or air pollution – Sustainable Merton’s Community Champions are an inspirational force for change.

Sustainable Merton is the borough’s leading environmental charity, set up in 2007 to engage local people in addressing global environmental issues. Community Champions are the volunteers on the ground who make change happen.

With a mission to improve air quality, reduce waste and energy consumption and tackle food poverty, Community Champions are passionate about making the borough greener, cleaner and healthier. The group’s practical initiatives range from campaigning for shops and cafes to offer water bottle refills to distributing food grown in community orchards. Other activities include litter picking, with support from the council, as well as promoting energy saving, community gardening and engaging people through blogs, social media and events.

As Amy Coyne, Communications Coordinator for Sustainable Merton, explained: “Community action – by the community for the benefit of the whole community – is a powerful way to improve our environment and inspire others to join us, so that we can all be part of the solution to issues of waste, air quality, energy and food. “By joining Merton’s leading environmental charity as a Community Champion, you will have the opportunity to take practical action to reduce waste and increase recycling in the borough, improve the quality of the air we breathe, cut carbon emissions and value fresh, healthy food.”

Merton Council funds the Community Champion scheme via the Community Infrastructure Levy.

If you’re interested in getting involved, visit sustainablemerton.org/volunteer for more information and to register.
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 and find out more:

- **Pizza Express**, The Broadway, Wimbledon, free pizza on 8 Jan at 6.00pm-7.30pm.
- **Coco Beanz Café**, London Road, Morden, free coffee on 22 Jan at 10.30am-12.00pm, 12 Feb at 10.30am-12.00pm, 11 Mar at 10.30am-12.00pm.

Or call us to discuss us visiting you.

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

Open your heart and home to change a child’s life

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

The Wimbledon Foundation is offering one lucky winner the chance to see The Championships trophies and Centre Court on a tour of Wimbledon.

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, ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:**

Who won the 2019 Ladies’ Singles Final?
A) Serena Williams     B) Angelique Kerber     C) Simona Halep

Visit merton.gov.uk/mymerton to enter.

The closing date for entries is 31 December 2019.

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 24-26 December 2019 and 1 January 2020. Tours do not run between 1 June and 25 July 2020. 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.
Helping people out of homelessness

Homelessness devastates lives, which is why Merton Council takes a proactive approach to prevent people losing their homes.

Celebrities, including Dame Helen Mirren, will camp out in Trafalgar Square on 7 December to raise awareness of, and money for, homeless people around the world. Here in the UK, figures from the charity Shelter reveal that more than 320,000 people are currently homeless, with this total rising each year.

While rough sleeping is the visible face of homelessness, the figures include the many families living in, often unsuitable, temporary accommodation – in some cases for several years.

Rising rents in London’s private housing sector, along with a shortage of genuinely affordable accommodation, means it is increasingly difficult for many people to afford a place to live.

The positive news is that Merton has a good record when it comes to preventing homelessness – we have fewer people living in temporary accommodation than any other London borough.

The reason is a proactive approach. According to the council’s housing options manager, Elliot Brunton, “We do a lot to prevent people from becoming homeless; we negotiate on their behalf with landlords to prevent evictions and we can intervene with the benefits agencies too. In priority cases, we can assist with a rent deposit or help pay off arrears. The message is, don’t wait until the bailiffs are at the door, come and see us as soon as things become difficult.”

Rough sleeping in Merton is less common than in central London boroughs, but numbers are still rising – from as few as five a decade ago, to more than 200 in one year. Historically, the borough has not had its own homeless shelter, although the YMCA organises a temporary winter night shelter each year.

Following successful bids for government funding, the council has a range of initiatives, including outreach workers to help people access services, help with rent deposit money and access emergency and temporary accommodation.

Floating hub to help the homeless

This November an innovative ‘floating hub’ service has set up in the former police station at Figges Marsh. A floating hub is a temporary homelessness resource run by the charity St Mungos. Open for just 15 days, the hub offers 16 beds for rough sleepers, with access to food, hot showers and other necessities. While staying at the hub, people receive help to find a stable home, whether that’s through counselling, medical care, benefits advice or support to find employment.

Find out more

If you are worried about becoming homeless, get advice now from the council’s housing options service, by calling at the Civic Centre reception, ringing 020 8545 3636 or visiting merton.gov.uk/homelessness.
Will you take the clean air challenge?

It is the start of a brand new year and decade, which is a great time to make your small change for cleaner air. This January, take action and commit to three simple changes to everyday activities, which will make a big difference to air quality in Merton as well as your health.

Air quality is an issue that affects all Londoners, and improving it is a big priority for the council. Like much of London, Merton is designated an Air Quality Management Area. This means more needs to be done in our borough to reduce the emissions that are so harmful to health – especially in children.

Road traffic is the biggest cause of London’s air pollution, with nearly two thirds of the main pollutant, nitrogen dioxide, emitted from vehicles.

With initiatives such as more electric car charging points, school safety zones, play streets, car free days and incentives to encourage greener journeys, the council is taking action to reduce air pollution caused by traffic. However, we cannot make the level of change that is needed without significant help from you.

So, in 2020 we’re asking you to think about how you travel around the borough and consider leaving your car at home for more of the journeys you take. Could you switch from a petrol or diesel car to an electric or hybrid, or even do without a car altogether?
In the New Year, we will be launching our NEW campaign my clean air challenge.

Running throughout January, the challenge invites Merton residents to commit to three actions to help cut air pollution and improve everyone’s health.

1. **Switch off your engine when you’re not moving**
   Idling needlessly increases air pollution and is a particular issue outside schools, in town centres and at level crossings.

2. **Walk, cycle, scoot or take public transport instead of driving**
   Walking and cycling mean zero pollution, with added mental and physical wellbeing benefits. These healthy forms of travel are also an easy way of adding activity to your day.

3. **Sign up to airTEXT**
   This free service provides three-day forecast alerts for air quality, pollen, UV and temperature via SMS text message, email and voicemail. These alerts are particularly helpful for people with asthma, bronchitis or other health conditions, which are exacerbated by poor air quality.

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**Do you want to go the extra mile?**
Here are even more tips to tackle air pollution:

- Bonfires are a significant cause of pollution. Sign up for the council’s garden waste collections instead. Visit merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste
- Become a volunteer at future idling action days and help encourage other car drivers to switch off their engine when their car is stationary. Visit merton.gov.uk/idling
- If you’re replacing your car, consider an electric vehicle or joining a car club instead.
- Having your car serviced regularly and keeping tyres at the right pressure can help too.
- Make sure your boiler is serviced each year to help it burn fuel more cleanly.
- Avoid buying wood burning stoves as they release thousands of chemicals into the air. If you already have one, use it occasionally and visit merton.gov.uk/cleanair for further advice.

Feeling inspired? Visit merton.gov.uk/cleanair or follow us on Twitter and Facebook for all the latest clean air information, tips and challenges.

@mertoncouncil
@Merton_Council
A giving Christmastime

Donating food, toiletries, supermarket gift cards, or time can bring some joy to those who are facing challenging circumstances over the festive period. My Merton finds out how giving this Christmas can really make a difference.

Help Wimbledon Foodbank at Christmas

Christmas is probably the most challenging time of year for people on low incomes and, unsurprisingly, Wimbledon Foodbank’s busiest season. During the Christmas period, the foodbank can see as many people in two days as usually visit in a month.

If you can help by donating items, please drop them off at the foodbank’s warehouse or one of the boxes in local supermarkets – you’ll find details on the foodbank website. Wimbledon Foodbank puts together treat bags for every household who attends over the festive season, so donations of chocolate or biscuit tins, selection boxes and crackers are really welcome at this time of year – please donate before 12 December.

Toiletries and household goods are also in demand, especially shower gels, shampoo, toothpaste, soap powder, fabric condition and nappies.

According to the foodbank’s manager Corinne: “Our most distressing cases usually come at Christmas – family members fighting cancer while struggling to make ends meet, for example. If you would like to donate a supermarket gift card to help them during Christmas, this would be a great treat.”

Wimbledon Foodbank has seen a 40% increase in people relying on its help in the past year, with almost 6,000 people receiving food parcels, one third of them for children.

Local residents have certainly responded to its appeals. Corinne said: “Since opening, we have received 295 tons of food donations. The support of the community is the only way the foodbank can operate. We have been very blessed with 95% of all our donations coming from individuals and families in Merton. “Unfortunately, running the foodbank comes with its own costs. If you are able to donate money, it will help us to keep doing what we do. Any help from corporations and individuals is really appreciated and needed.”

With demand so high over Christmas, the foodbank is also looking for volunteers, to help out whenever possible during the two weeks from 16 December.

The foodbank opens for seven sessions, six days a week at venues around the borough. If you or someone you know is struggling to put food on the table, you can be referred to the foodbank by various local agencies. You will be given vouchers to exchange for a food parcel.

You can find out more about receiving help or donating money, food or your time on the website wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk, by emailing wimbledonfoodbank@gmail.com or by calling 020 8544 0126.

Christmas cheer for every child

Donate a gift to ensure every Merton child receives a Christmas present. Gifts suitable for children aged one week to 18-years-old can be donated to the Met Police’s Christmas Tree Campaign. In recent years, Council officers have helped distribute hundreds of presents generously donated by Merton residents to children in care and those from families in need.

Visit the website to be allocated a child to buy a present for, which can then be dropped off at either Mitcham or Wimbledon Police stations. Donors are advised to spend up to £10 per gift.

Shop local

While online Christmas shopping is convenient, it’s not quite the same as browsing for gifts in small independent shops. Small Business Saturday is an annual event, which encourages people to get out and support their local high street retailers. This year it is on Saturday 7 December. Businesses across Merton will be taking part, with activities and promotions. Find out more on the day’s website smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com.
Residents are recycling more than ever before, putting Merton on track to become one of the best recycling boroughs in London.

The latest data shows that in the nine months following the start of the new recycling and rubbish collection service, on 1 October last year, Merton is striving to achieve its stretched recycling target of 48%. In May, the recycling rate increased to a record 47%. This puts Merton on track to make it into the top quartile of all 33 London local authorities for recycling by the end of the year.

A key aim of the new collection service, which introduced alternate weekly collections and wheelie bins, was to increase the borough’s recycling rate from 37% to 45% within 12 months and a stretched target of 48%.

Reaching our initial challenging recycling target several months early is an incredible achievement. This is thanks to residents, who have significantly reduced the amount of waste they produce and recycled more of their rubbish.

The introduction of the new recycling and rubbish collection service was the council’s largest service change in recent times and residents are quickly realising the potential of separating their recycling and presenting it in the right container on the right day for collection. Residents can also recycle more types of materials than previously, including textiles and batteries.

Veolia’s General Manager for South London, Scott Edgell, said: “I’m delighted that the new recycling and rubbish collection service is helping Merton to recycle more than ever before. Our crews have worked incredibly hard to help deliver this change and I would like to thank them for their efforts. I would also like to thank the residents of Merton for their support and patience over the last 12 months; change on this scale is never easy but the service is now settling down and the new improved recycling rate speaks for itself.”

The latest data, which covers April to August, shows:

- Food waste recycling is up by 75%, compared to the same period last year – before the service change began. This is an average of 473 tonnes per month – equivalent to the weight of more than two blue whales.

- A 14% reduction in the total amount of rubbish produced has also had a major impact. This is 2,887 tonnes less than the same five months last year – equivalent to the weight of more than two hippopotamuses – and generates significant financial savings.

- The rubbish is disposed of through the energy recovery facility at Beddington, rather than being sent to landfill, creating green energy in the form of electricity.
Houses and converted flats

**Food waste**
Collected every week

- All cooked and uncooked food
- Dairy products: cheese and eggs

*Line your indoor kitchen caddy with compostable liners or old newspaper (no plastic bags).*

**Paper & card**
Collected alternate weeks

- Newspapers and magazines
- Card and cardboard

*Flatten down large cardboard boxes before putting them in the bin.*

**Plastics, glass, cans and cartons**
Collected alternate weeks

- Plastic bottles
- Plastic pots, tubs, trays etc.

*Empty and rinse all containers. Squash plastic bottles. Remove film lids from plastic pots, tubs etc.*

**Rubbish**
Collected every 2 weeks

- Non-recyclable rubbish
- Dirty cardboard

*Only rubbish placed in this wheele bin (with the lid closed) will be collected.*

**Textiles & shoes**
Collected every week

- Clothes and linen
- Shoes (tied together)

*Place in a tied plastic carrier bag next to or on top of your bins.*

**Batteries**
Collected every week

- Household batteries

*Place in an untied plastic carrier bag.*
at-a-glance guide

- Fruit and vegetable peelings
- Tea bags & coffee grounds
- Meat and fish bones
- Toilet and kitchen roll tubes
- Egg boxes
- Junk mail and catalogues
- Glass jars and bottles
- Cans, tins, aerosols and tin foil
- Food and drinks cartons
- Plastic bags and film
- Polystyrene
- Nappies (in a tied bag)

- Duvets
- Pillows and cushions
- Curtains
- No car batteries

Communal flats
Collected every week

- Food waste
- Recycling
- Rubbish

No thanks
- Plastic bags
- Packaging
- Oil or liquids
- Dirty cardboard (e.g. pizza boxes)
- Shredded paper
- Tissues & paper towels
- Food & drink cartons (these go in your recycling box)
- Plastic bags
- Plastic film
- Crisp packets
- Hard plastics (toys etc)
- Polystyrene
- Anything recyclable
- Electrical items
- Hazardous waste
- DIY waste
- Gas bottles
- Batteries
We’re dreaming of a green Christmas

The festive season can be expensive – not just for our pockets, but also for the environment. Planning what gifts and food you will need before going shopping, and buying items with less packaging will all help to reduce the amount of waste thrown away after Christmas and save money too. But it’s not all bah humbug! Here are some tips to enjoy Christmas festivities in an eco-friendly and cost-effective way.

- **Recycling and rubbish collection days** Make sure you know when your collections will be over the festive period – check the back cover of My Merton.

- **Recycling relatives** Ensure any visitors to your house know what to put in each bin. Many common Christmas items, including large sweet tins, can be recycled, as well as foil, batteries and textiles.

- **Christmas tree recycling** If you opt for a real Christmas tree, try to find one that is UK-grown and has an FSC certification. If it has roots, you could plant it in your garden after Christmas or we will collect it free of charge – details on the back cover of My Merton.

- **It's a wrap** If you scrunched your wrapping paper and it stays in a ball, it can be recycled. Please remove ribbons, bows, batteries from musical cards, and plastic sticky tape from cards and wrapping paper before recycling them. Put card and paper in your blue lidded wheelie bin (or communal recycling bin for flats).

- **Eat your greens** Avoid single-use plastics by buying loose fruit and vegetables from a market, greengrocer or supermarket. Unavailable plastic pots, tubs and bottles can all be recycled in your recycling box (or communal recycling bin for flats).

- **Eat up your leftovers** Lots of leftover food can be used to make tasty new recipes – visit lovefoodhatewaste.com for ideas. Many foods can be frozen before their use-by date. Best before dates are indicative of quality only – for example bread can be toasted or used in recipes which require breadcrumbs.

- **Deck the halls** Create your own natural decorations, such as homemade biscuits, sprigs of holly or mistletoe or a festive wreath. Keep the kids busy making recycled paper-chains or cutting up last year’s Christmas cards into gift tags.

- **Green gifts** Give an experience, rather than wrapping a present – days out, a trip to the cinema, theatre tickets, or a promise to babysit all make great gifts. Or shop second hand for a vintage piece, bake a cake or create a homemade present for a truly unique gift.

Get more tips for an eco-friendly festive season at our Christmas roadshow at Wimbledon Piazza on Tuesday 10 December between 10.30am and 1.30pm.
Healthy new decade

Getting healthy isn’t just for the New Year. Promoting healthier lifestyles is a key priority for Merton Council. Read on for some tips on how you can make some beneficial lasting changes.

Be active in 2020

Could 2020 be the year that sees you moving more? We know that being active has numerous benefits for our physical and mental well-being. So, the New Year will see a local campaign urging us all to try new types of physical activity, if you’re up for it. We’ll be promoting different ways to get moving, from playing with your children in one of our parks, to walking or cycling instead of using the car. The campaign will offer something for everyone; children, adults and older people. Those who are currently active, and those who are not. While the council will coordinate the campaign, sports groups and individuals are invited to get involved and share their enthusiasm with people across the borough. Find out more on Twitter, Facebook and at merton.gov.uk.

No need to go it alone

Sadly, for some people, the festive season can be a time that intensifies their feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The good news is that there are lots of organisations in Merton ready to help. The borough’s seven libraries are a good place to start, as they offer a host of clubs and wellness classes, in addition to hosting a wide variety of talks and events. Wimbledon Guild and Age UK Merton offer drop-in activities and provide befriending services. Practical help for those affected by mental health issues, and at risk of crisis, is on offer at The Sunshine Café in Wimbledon Chase, which is open seven days a week.

Keeping older residents well over winter

The council is working with local organisations to help keep older people happy and healthy over the colder months. Warm and Well packs are being sent out to residents with details of social activities and friendship groups to help older people enjoy getting out and about. The packs also included the Winter Wrapped Up guide from Age UK, which has useful tips on how older people can keep themselves and their homes warm.

find out more... merton.gov.uk/libraries wimbledonguild.co.uk ageuk.org.uk/merton
Sensory project transforms children’s libraries

Spaces with themes from Antarctica to a lush jungle are providing places for all children, but particularly those with special educational needs or disabilities, to feel comfortable and make discoveries.

Visit one of Merton’s libraries and you could find yourself in the heart of the forest, under the sea or at the South Pole being chased by racing penguins.

Each of the borough’s seven children’s libraries has been transformed into an immersive space as part of a groundbreaking project to make them an exciting place for all children, whatever their sensory needs.

Project Sense, as it is known, is the result of a successful £95k bid by Merton’s libraries for Arts Council funding. It will see children’s libraries become unique, sensory spaces around the themes – Antarctica, circus, weather, the jungle, under the sea, the forest and outer space. Each library will have toys to suit its theme; from inflatable minions and racing penguins to aeroplanes.

The themed spaces will have their own particular scents and sounds too, along with specialist sensory equipment. There will also be a dedicated special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) book section in every library – 5,000 titles have been ordered as part of the project.

For children who find noise distracting, or sometimes need a space to escape, equipment such as ear defenders and pop-up dark dens will be available to borrow. Sunflower lanyards can also be collected from library staff – so they are aware of any children who may have additional needs.

The library service has bought specially-adapted toys to be used in activity sessions as well as recordable photo albums, voice recorders and other equipment – all of which can loaned out for families to take home.

Activities programme

December sees the launch of a dedicated events and activities programme for children and families with SEND needs. These will range from sensory story times and toy activity sessions to karate and drama workshops. Other aspects of the project include family learning programmes and social events for parents and carers.

As well as transforming the physical space, Project Sense is about increasing awareness of children with SEND among the wider population. As a result, all staff are receiving autism-awareness, deafness and visual impairment training to help them support children and families using the libraries. The library service will be working with all of the borough’s SEND schools and running disability-awareness sessions in mainstream schools too.

Merton’s successful schools library membership scheme will also be expanded to include all special schools with regular class visits set up.

The scheme is the latest unique project from Merton’s award-winning library service. Libraries in the borough boast a high ratio of users to population and pride themselves on being great spaces for families as well as inclusive to the whole community.

The innovative project is the first of its kind in the UK. The council is delighted to be awarded this funding to create a sensory area in each library.

As part of the project, the wider community, library staff and volunteers will be working with our partners and schools to break down barriers and dispel misconceptions of special educational needs and disabilities. The aim is to reduce isolation and open new doors of opportunity for children and their families across the whole borough.

Samantha’s son has been exploring West Barnes’ new children’s library. She told us: “Ever since my son discovered the new circus-themed sensory equipment at West Barnes Library, he asks to visit every day after school. The ceiling lights and bubble tube are particular highlights for him. He likes being able to switch the bubbles on and off, select his favourite colours and even mix them to create new colours.

“We also appreciate the new selection of books aimed at children with SEND and their parents and carers. We are planning on doing a tour of all the Merton libraries to see the different themes, equipment and books they all have.”
Could you help?

We are looking for volunteers to help run some of the activity sessions for children. Volunteers won’t need to make a big commitment. Even as little as an hour a month could make a difference. To find out more please email library.enquiries@merton.gov.uk or call 020 8545 3317.

Find out more about activities planned for all libraries at merton.gov.uk/libraries
Keeping all our residents safe

Your voice matters

Hate crime has risen nationally and while Merton remains one of the safest London boroughs, the council is determined to tackle all crimes committed against people due to an actual or perceived difference. *My Merton* looks at the support available for victims of hate crime.

If you’ve been a victim of hate crime, the message is that, in Merton, you’re not alone – help is available and if you report the crime to the police, it will be taken seriously and properly investigated.

A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because of some actual or perceived difference; maybe your race, sexual orientation, religion, disability or your gender identity. It doesn’t have to include physical violence to be a crime.

Since January, a monthly drop-in surgery for people affected by hate crime has been held in the Civic Centre. No appointment is necessary. Groups taking part include the Polish Family Association, Merton Centre for Independent Living and BAME Voice.

At the heart of the project is Tell MAMA, an organisation, which records anti-Muslim attacks and offers support. According to Tell MAMA’s data, recorded crimes against people because they are Muslim are on the increase in the UK, often peaking after big news events – such as the mass shooting at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Islamophobic crimes have ranged from verbal abuse to physical attacks, with women, who visibly identify as Muslim, most commonly targeted – examples include attempts to forcibly remove headscarves. Attacks have taken place in the street and on public transport, but others have happened in people’s workplaces, and even hospitals and schools.

Rehman Anwer from Tell MAMA urged local people, who have experienced hate crime in any form, to seek help – with the drop-in surgeries a good place to start: “Our message is we stand together as a unified voice to tackle hate crime. We encourage people to report the crime to the police – we will also speak to the police on your behalf. But whatever you decide, our experienced caseworkers offer support and advice."

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

The Civic Centre surgeries are held on the second Tuesday of each month, between 1pm and 2pm.

No more!

Merton will once again be taking part in the annual 16 days against domestic and sexual violence and abuse, starting on Monday 25 November with stalls around the borough and social media activity. If you or someone you know is suffering domestic abuse, contact Merton’s One Stop Shop, Morden Baptist Church, open Mondays 9.30am to 12 noon, except bank holidays. Or call Victim Support on 020 7801 1777 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Always call 999 if you are in danger. For more advice visit merton.gov.uk/domesticviolence.

Ask Angela

Remember, if you are on a date or in a bar or club with someone and it doesn’t feel right, ask the staff for ‘Angela’. Bar staff have been specially trained to help anyone who feels unsafe; ask for ‘Angela’ and you’ll get help finding a taxi and leaving discreetly.

Stay safe over the festive season

With people out and about celebrating, the festive season can bring an increase in burglaries and thefts. Read our five top tips for keeping your valuables safe.

1 Don’t advertise expensive gifts by leaving boxes outside and don’t leave curtains open to show off presents.
2 If you’re going out, make sure doors are locked securely and leave a light on, so it looks like someone’s home.
3 If you are leaving town, cancel deliveries and ask a neighbour to remove post.
4 Be careful with your belongings in crowded shops, bars and restaurants. Don’t take more money or cards than you need and be wary at cashpoints.
5 Register new bikes, tech and other valuables with a service such as immobilise.com. If your children receive new phones or tablets as gifts, enable the devices’ tracking features and keep them hidden when out.
Tell us about being an outreach worker
My role is very varied and busy. I educate young people about crime by engaging them in interactive, awareness-raising Fearless workshops. I also provide free training to professionals.

What's the best thing about your job?
One very cool aspect is its diverse and very people-centred nature. Through education, I get to equip young people to make safer choices and bring about social change.

How safe are young people in Merton?
Despite steady reports of youth violence across the capital, many young Londoners actually feel safe and secure where they live and go to school. Merton is notable across 32 London boroughs for its partnerships to make communities safer and engage young people in the process.

Is there one piece of advice you could give parents?
I would encourage parents to engage their young people in a respectful conversation. This means speaking with them, as opposed to speaking at them. Effective communication increases the likelihood of young people confiding in their parents, and potentially avoiding dangerous situations.

What should residents know about Fearless – and Crimestoppers?
When you contact Fearless or Crimestoppers, we are unable to trace your telephone number or IP address as these are both encrypted to guarantee your identity remains completely anonymous. We never ask who you are, just what you know.

find out more
fearless.org
Helping adults with learning disabilities lead independent lives

Supporting vulnerable people in the borough is a key priority for Merton Council. *My Merton* caught up with Deslyn Chart, who works to help adults with learning disabilities gain the confidence to live independently.

Deslyn Chart has worked for the council’s supported living service for the past 13 years. She is currently a senior support worker at Dolliffe Close, Mitcham, which provides flats for 18 adults with learning disabilities.

People come to Dolliffe Close as a stepping-stone to living independently in the community. Each resident has a flat and their own tenancy. With support from the staff, they carry out all the tasks of everyday life. Some attend day centres or college and others work in local shops.

Says Deslyn: “We empower people to live their lives to the full. Some service users go shopping and to the bank independently, while others are supported by staff. During the evening, we support each person to cook. We don’t choose for them, they choose when to eat and what they want to cook.

“For me it’s a pleasure to see them gaining independence; knowing that when they came into the service they could not do these things and with our support they have mastered them all.”

Some of the residents come to Dolliffe Close from The Gables, another unit offering a higher level of support. Others have come from a family home where their parents are getting older and are keen for them to have independence.

“Sometimes, coming from home, they are a bit tearful,” says Deslyn. “Every weekend they want to go home. But after a couple of weeks they don’t because here we have such a lot going on.

“There are so many activities. We have barbecues, DJs, karaoke and birthday parties. One resident even hired two limos so they could all tour around London. We’ve supported people to book Caribbean cruises and holidays abroad that they have chosen. Last month, all the ladies went for a spa day.

“Thanks to the many get togethers, some of our service users have found their soulmates and got engaged, married and moved out to the community, where they receive regular support.

“It’s a rewarding job. I am very passionate about my work and I never want to leave until the day I make up my mind to retire. When you see everything we accomplish, you feel good in yourself.”
Interested in teaching?
Teach Wimbledon is a collection of primary and secondary schools in the London Borough of Merton who offer training for PGCE qualification.

- High Standards
- Teamwork and Support
- Professional Integrity

Qualification leads to PGCE/60 masters credits and QTS

Feedback on Teach Wimbledon
- “Working within the school has been a really valuable experience.”
- “I feel like part of school family already.”
- “The university sessions have complemented my school based experience.”

Train to Teach events
Wimbledon Library 4-7pm
Thursday 16th January 2020
Thursday 14th May 2020

London Congress Centre 10-4pm
Saturday 30th November 2019
Saturday 27th June 2020

Ursuline High School 5-8pm Thursday 12th March 2020

Interested in teaching?
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Fortescue Gardens is a collection of 63 studios, one, two and three bedroom apartments available through Shared Ownership.

Accessed via a new private road and adjacent to the Myrna Close nature reserve, the development is designed to be at one with its surroundings. With great local amenities and just a six minute walk from Colliers Wood station, Fortescue Gardens offers the best of urban living.

COMING SOON
REGISTER NOW!

Register to Buy Off-Plan Now
CALL: 020 7378 5638
shared.ownership@myclarionhousing.com
myclarionhousing.com/sharedownership
COMPETITION

Win a family ticket for Cinderella at New Wimbledon Theatre

To win a family ticket to see Cinderella, visit merton.gov.uk/mymerton to enter and answer the following question.

Melody Thornton was the youngest member of which successful pop group?

a) The Pussycat Dolls
b) Straycats
c) Topcat

Closing date for entries: Sunday 8 December 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 a family ticket to see Cinderella at New Wimbledon Theatre, for a performance January 2020.

A galaxy of stars have been unveiled for this production of the fairy godmother of all pantomimes. Melody Thornton, who achieved global fame as a member of successful pop group The Pussycat Dolls is to star as Cinderella. Samantha Womack, best known for her role as Ronnie Mitchell in EastEnders is to play The Wicked Stepmother. Joining her as The Fairy Godmother, and making her pantomime debut, will be award-winning soprano Lesley Garrett. Comedian, magician and television regular Pete Firman is to star as Buttons.

Need help keeping warm this winter?

www.warmandwellinmerton.co.uk

For help or information call us on: 020 8648 5792
Festive theatre

**Catch uplifting new musical Christmas play...**

The Last Noel, with live music and original songs by award-winning playwright Chris Bush is to tour venues across Merton. Attic Theatre Company’s production takes audiences into a family’s home on Christmas Day as they prepare a feast – and miss someone who should be joining them at the dinner table.

The song-filled funny and poignant show, suitable for ages 12+, illuminates the importance of family rituals and what really matters most to members.

The Last Noel’s tour features multiple performances at Merton Arts Space in Wimbledon Library, in addition to dates at Mitcham Library, New Horizons Centre in Pollards Hill and the My Raynes Park Festival. For many shows, audiences are invited to decide how much they would like to pay for seats.

**Friday 22 November–Sunday 1 December, [www.attictheatrecompany.com](http://www.attictheatrecompany.com)**

**Harvey by Mary Chase**

Mary Chase’s Pulitzer prize-winning comedy featuring the charming relationship between Elwood P. Dowd and his best friend, Harvey, the 6’1” tall white rabbit which only he can see. The show, which is one of the longest-running West End and Broadway comedies ever, is packed full of kindness, wit and whimsy.

**Lantern Arts Centre, Tolverne Road, Raynes Park SW20 8RA. Wednesday 11–Saturday 14 December, 7.30pm. Tickets from £12. Suitable for eight years+. [www.lanternarts.org](http://www.lanternarts.org)**

**Christmas Chaos**

Written and directed by Susie Pottinger, this delightful show, set to brighten up everyone’s Christmas, is perfect for young children. Featuring some great songs, the play tells the tale of Amelia who is stranded in a ‘boring hotel’ for Christmas without her presents, because snow has cancelled her flight. But as Amelia meets a number of different visitors she begins to understand Christmas isn’t all about presents.

**Lantern Arts Centre, as before. Sunday 1 December, 2pm. Tickets £6. [www.lanternarts.org](http://www.lanternarts.org)**

**The Last Noel**

**Friday 22 November–Sunday 1 December**

**Spotlight on...**

**New Wimbledon Theatre**

Fairy godmother of all pantos

Cinderella has something for everyone to enjoy. Samantha Womack, known for playing Ronnie Mitchell in EastEnders, is to lead the cast as the wicked stepmother. While globally-famous opera singer Lesley Garrett makes her pantomime debut as The Fairy Godmother. Former The Pussy Cat Dolls member Melody Thornton is to star in the title role of Cinderella and television comedian Pete Firman will play Buttons. **Saturday 7 December–Sunday 5 January. Tickets from £13. [www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon](http://www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon)**

**The Paper Dolls**

Polka Theatre and Little Angel Theatre’s hit co-production brings to life the book written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Rebecca Cobb. The enchanting show, featuring stunning puppetry, tells the tale of Rosie who makes a string of paper dolls with her mum and takes them on a fantastical adventure. Whirling through home and garden, they fly through the air dodging a toy dinosaur and a snapping oven-glove crocodile until they are confronted with very sharp scissors.

**New Wimbledon Studio Theatre. Wednesday 11 December–Sunday 5 January. Recommended for ages three to six. Family tickets £12, babies go free. [93 The Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1QG. Book online: www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon](http://www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon)**
Spotlight on...

**Morden Hall Park**

**Ride in festive style**

Enjoy a 30 minute ride around beautiful Morden Hall Park in carriages drawn by Shire horses accompanies by costumed footmen. Saturdays and Sundays from 7 December until 22 December. Prices: adult £16, child £12 and family tickets available.

**Visit Father Christmas** and his elves in an enchanted grotto to receive a gift chosen just for you. Every weekend from Saturday 23 November to Sunday 15 December from 10am until 5pm. Price £12 per child.

**Storytime with Mother Christmas** for under 5s. Thursdays and Fridays, 5–13 December from 9.30am until 10.15am. Price adults and children £3 each.

Morden Hall Park, Morden Hall Road, Morden. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park/whats-on

**Christmas crackers**

**Seasonal Craft Fair**

Discover heritage crafts from felt-making to stained glass and pottery and buy some unique gifts.

Merton Heritage Centre, Morden Library, 100 London Road, Morden. Saturday 16 November, 10am–4.30pm. Free to enter.

**Christmas Fair**

Traditional fair with stalls, refreshments, children’s activities, and maybe a visit from Father Christmas too.

St Saviour’s Church, Grand Drive, Raynes Park. Saturday 16 November, 11.30am–2pm. Admission by donation. www.stsaviour.net

**St Matthew’s Church Winter Fair**

Festive food and gifts, plus a ballet show by pupils of West Wimbledon Dance Academy.

St Matthew’s Church, Durham Road, Raynes Park. Saturday 16 November, 11.30am–2pm. www.stmatthewswimbledon.org

**St Martin’s Church Gift and Craft Fair**

Charity fair in aid of the church’s missionary work with Christmas gifts, fun children’s activities, refreshments and Father Christmas.

St Martin’s Church, Camborne Road, (behind the Co-op on Grand Drive). Saturday 23 November, 10.30am–2.30pm. www.stmartinsmorden.org.uk

**Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Christmas Fair**

Traditional Christmas event packed with fun for all the family.

Burlington Road, New Malden. Saturday 23 November, 10.30am–2.30pm. Entry: £2 adults. www.sacredheart.merton.sch.uk

**Lantern Christmas Celebration**

Popular Christmas market with a wide variety of stalls coupled with a full programme of entertainment. Christmas lights switch on.

The Lantern Centre, 195–205 Worple Road, Raynes Park. Saturday 30 November, 10am–5pm. www.lanternarts.org

**A Ceremony of Carols**

Beautiful selection of choral music including Britten’s *A Ceremony of Carols*, along with the opportunity of audience participation.

St Matthew’s Church, Durham Road, Raynes Park. Saturday 7 December, 7.30–9.30pm. Free. www.hillsingers.co.uk

**Carols by Candlelight with Sonoro**

Enjoy an evening of festive choral favourites and carols at this concert conducted by Neil Ferris with Michael Higgins at the organ.

Sacred Heart, Edge Hill, Wimbledon. Tuesday 17 December, 8–10pm. www.sonoromusic.com

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Free magical events to launch the Christmas season are to be held across Merton. As well as the switching on of sparkling tree lights people will be able to enjoy a host of festive music, plays and food. It's a great chance to celebrate with your community and maybe even get a chance to meet Santa.

Celebrate in Pollards Hill
The festive season is to kick off with an event at the New Horizon Centre from 4pm. Following the lighting up event, play The Last Noel is to be staged from 7pm.
Tuesday 26 November

Winter Wonderland
The Broadway is to be transformed into a sparkling wonderland with dancing penguins and roller skating Christmas puddings. Highlights include a Christmas Market, ice sculpture show, snow globe photo-booth and children’s rides. Festive music from brass bands and choirs along with seasonal food treats. Spectacular firework display, courtesy of Centre Court Shopping Centre at 5.30pm.

Sunday 1 December, noon-7pm

Raynes Park Christmas Festival
The fun event, featuring Santa’s Grotto, the Salvation Army Band and carols from local choirs, is to take place outside the railway station. The Christmas tree lights will be switched on at 5pm.
Friday 6 December, 3.30-6pm

West Barnes
A host of Christmas stalls, in addition to choirs and entertainments, with the big light switch on at 4.30pm. The event, at the Earl Beatty pub site in West Barnes Lane, Motspur Park is being held in association with St Raphael’s Hospice
Saturday 7 December, 3–7pm.

Wimbledon Village
Family fun featuring the arrival of Father Christmas and his elves on horseback. Host of choirs and bands, and activities for children including face-painting, balloon modelling, fairground and pony rides. Held in aid of charity Wimbledon Guild.
Sunday 8 December, 10am–5pm.
www.wimbledon-village.com

Mitcham’s turn to host the big borough Christmas Lights up
Everyone is invited to come to Mitcham Fair Green and enjoy a host of festive treats including music and entertainments. Free fun for all the family and some surprises. The switch to illuminate the Christmas tree is set to be flicked at 5.30pm.
Friday 29 November from 4pm.

Keep an eye on the council’s website, which we’ll be updating with the main Christmas events. merton.gov.uk/christmaslights
Entertainment

Polka Theatre’s Big Charity Comedy Show
Omid Djalili, Michael McIntyre and friends perform live to raise funds for Polka’s redevelopment scheme for its home in The Broadway, Wimbledon. Grand Hall, Battersea Arts Centre. Monday 9 December, 7pm. Tickets from £66. www.bac.org.uk/polkacomedy

The Men of Raynes Park 1914–18
As part of a project to restore the war memorial at St. Saviour’s Church, Merton volunteers have been researching the stories of 99 men of Raynes Park, who gave their lives for King and Country during the First World War.
West Barnes Library, Station Road, New Malden. Tuesday 19 November, 10.30am–noon. Free.

Caring for your family mementoes: basic conservation
Part of the Merton Heritage Centre 25th anniversary programme, this free workshop will feature presentations from local experts. Learn how to store and preserve your precious photos, documents and memorabilia for future generations.
Merton Heritage Centre, Merton Civic Centre, London Road, Morden. Saturday 30 November, 1–3.30pm. Free.

Discover Merton

Festive Local History
Great chance for Merton’s history enthusiasts and nostalgia lovers to get bargain prices on a wide range of books, maps, postcards and assorted souvenirs.
Merton Heritage Centre, Merton Civic Centre, 100 London Road, Morden. Saturday 16 November–Wednesday 18 December, 9.30am–5pm.

Talks

Wimbledon National Trust Association
Unexplained Mysteries and Cover-ups Speaker Andy Thomas sheds light on some of the most famous unexplained mysteries of recent history. This thought-provoking talk covers UFOs, ghosts and psychic phenomena. Saturday 16 November.

Literary and Artistic Thames Join Nicholas Brazil on a journey along the Thames, tapping into the river’s rich heritage of literary and artistic works. Saturday 18 January.

Standing up for trees Martin Boiling from the Woodland Trust will speak about the work of the organisation and its impact on the environment. Saturday 22 February.

Christ Church Hall, Cottenham Park Road. All talks 2.15–4pm. Members £3, non-members £3.50. 020 8401 2157 or www.wimbledonnta.org.uk

Spotlight on...

Merton’s libraries

Tuned In
Popular weekly sessions for people to jam with acclaimed musician Jah Wobble. Participants can also enjoy exercise sessions run by Fulham FC and AFC Wimbledon and chilling out with like-minded people. Instruments provided but people are welcome to bring their own. Merton Arts Space, Wimbledon Library, Compton Road, Wimbledon. Mondays at 7pm. Free.

App makes it easier for library users
The new Merton Libraries customer app is now live and available on both Apple and Android devices. The App provides a convenient way for people to renew books and search the libraries’ catalogues. The move boosts the libraries other digital services including Libby and RB Digital apps that provide customers with free eAudiobooks, magazines, lectures and music.

January is Health in Libraries Month
Health information to help everyone have a positive start to the New Year is to feature in Merton’s libraries throughout January 2020. Expect an excellent selection of books and promotions on a range of health related subjects from diabetes to sexual health advice for teenagers. Fitness sessions and health check ups will also be on offer.

merton.gov.uk/libraries
FilmMerton presents
Free film screenings curated by celebrities and community groups.

Screen Brand
Jo Brand has been making the nation laugh for almost thirty years. Take the opportunity to enjoy her favourite films.

True Stories (12)
Comedic musical vision of contemporary life and the directorial debut of Talking Heads’ David Byrne. Friday 15 November.

Terms of Endearment (15)
Multi-award winning classic which navigates a mother daughter-daughter relationship. Saturday 16 November.

Lumumba (*UR)
The true story by Raoul Peck on the revolutionary and caring African leaders who were assassinated by European powers. Friday 22 November.

Merton Priory Chapter House guided tour followed by walk along the Wandle Trail finishing at Carshalton Station. Meet at Colliers Wood Station, Sunday 23 February at 1.45pm. For more information, call 07944 833605 or email: mlnnunzet@gmail.com

Get walking – get healthy
Throughout the coming months

Black to Black
See movie historian Tony Warner’s picks of films which focus on the experiences of the black diaspora.

Coming to England (PG)
The amazing true story of Baroness Floella Benjamin became one of the first black presenters on British TV and later a peer. Wednesday 20 November.

Free film screenings curated by celebrities and community groups.

Life and Debt (PG)
Excellent documentary on tourism showcases how the paradise island of Jamaica was turned into a debt-ridden country by US backed institutions and British holidaymakers. Thursday 21 November.

Winter walks
Get walking – get healthy
Enjoy free wintry walks and discover more about the borough’s heritage with rambler Melanie Nunzet.

Mitcham Common health walk every Thursday followed by refreshments at Mitcham Golf Club. Meet 11am at Mitcham Junction Station. For details contact the Future Merton Road Safety Team by emailing road.safety@merton.gov.uk

Explore the ponds and hills of Mitcham Common Three-to-four mile circular walk. Meet at Mitcham Junction Station on Saturday 25 January at 2pm.

Charity Pantomime Evening
Join the Mayor of Merton, Councillor Janice Howard for this wonderful show of Cinderella and help raise funds for the Mayor’s charities.
New Wimbledon Theatre, 93 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1QG. Tuesday 10 December, 7pm. Tickets can be obtained via the theatre. Visit www.atgtickets.com/wimbledon

Mayor's Christmas Carol Service
Come and enjoy all the favourite carols at this event which is open to all. Mulled wine and mince pies served in the Church Hall following the service. Offering collected in aid of the Church and the Mayor’s Charities. St Winefride’s Church, 2 Latimer Road, SW19. Wednesday 18 December from 7.30pm. No advanced booking required.
what’s on
merton.gov.uk/events

Spotlight on... 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.

Wimbledon Library, 35 Wimbledon Hill Road, Wimbledon
Wednesday 29 January, 7.15pm

Council Chamber, Merton Civic Centre, 100 London Road, Morden
Wednesday 26 February, 7.15pm

Vestry Hall, 336–338 London Road, Mitcham
Thursday 27 February, 7.15pm

merton.gov.uk/communityforums

Keeping fit

The Craft Half Wimbledon
Fundraising 10k and half marathon organised by charity Street Child fuelled by fine craft beer. The stunning two lap course taking in the beautiful woodland of Wimbledon Common with beer sample and water en-route.

Wimbledon Common, Wimbledon. Sunday 17 November, 11.30am–4pm.

Tinsel 10k run
Show off your Christmas costume or running kit in this free run a beautiful park.
Meet by white bridge, Morden Hall Park. Sunday 22 December from 8.30am. Free.

Courses and drop-ins

Men’s Space
A weekly drop-in for men to socialise, share the news, their views, interests and stories. Set up by charity Wimbledon Guild to encourage more men to attend their range of free events and courses.

Guild House, 30–32 Worple Road, Wimbledon, SW19 4EF. Free. 020 8946 0735; www.wimbledonguild.co.uk

Nine-week singing course and show
Great chance for people of all abilities to enjoy singing in a group, learn some vocal skills and build their confidence. Tuesday nights at Katriona’s Singers Studio near Wimbledon, SW20 0SS. Full address details provided on booking.

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/9-week-singing-course-plus-show-night-tickets-73428054287

Fairs and markets

Twelve Days of Christmas
Twelve market days around five weekends throughout the festive period run by Love Wimbledon. Festive treats, unique gifts, original art, homewares and clothing.

The Piazza, Wimbledon. Saturday 23 November–Sunday 22 December, 11am–6pm.

www.lovewimbledon.org

Mum2mum Market
Buy top-quality second-hand baby and children’s clothes, toys books and equipment from around 40 sellers.

Ricards Lodge High School, Lake Road, Wimbledon SW19 7HB. Saturday 16 November, 10am–noon.

www.mum2mummarket.co.uk

For the latest updates on all the great events in Merton visit our online calendar at: merton.gov.uk/events

Got an event you want to tell everyone about? Submit it to our online calendar - it’s totally free.

Twelve Days of Christmas
Saturday 23 November–Sunday 22 December
Growing up in north Mitcham before 1970 was tough for a child with a sweet tooth. Venture outside and the heady scent of Pascall’s confectionery factory was hard to miss.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Pascall’s was a leading sweet manufacturer; churning out such favourites as the fruit bonbon, the chocolate éclair and the Murray mint.

The history of the brand began in Victorian times. Brothers James and Arthur Pascall set up a modest shop, just off Oxford Street, where they made and sold their sweet treats. Even in the 1860s, their little sweet shop, with its latticed windows, looked like something from a bygone era.

Sons of a Croydon baker and confectioner, the Pascalls had learned their art from an early age. James had gained business experience as a salesman for Cadbury. The family were staunch non-conformist Christians, with a strong work ethic and commitment to teetotalism – they saw sweets as a healthy alternative to alcohol.

As business boomed, a new factory was built on Blackfriars Road, employing hundreds of female workers. Its various lines included fondants, creams, liquorice, fruit gums and pastilles, with some ingredients imported from Paris.

The Mitcham factory followed in 1904. Initially it specialised in chocolate, but further confectionery lines were added as the site grew.

From the early days, James Pascall fostered good industrial relations. The work was hard but there were decent conditions, including a standard eight-hour day, with lunch breaks, regardless of the pressure of orders.

The factory had a subsidised canteen and free medical and dental checks. During the 1920s, junior employees received eight hours of education per week. Pascall’s also developed a lecture programme of its own, as well as a debating society and sports clubs – hundreds of Pascall’s girls learned to swim courtesy of their employer.

James Pascall died in 1918 and the factory passed to his son, Sydney. The firm struggled during the depression of the 1930s and subsequent wartime rationing, however, business was booming during the 1950s. The firm was then bought out, first by Beechams in 1964, then by Cadbury-Fry.

In 1970, the decision was taken to close the Mitcham factory with the loss of 1,200 jobs. Although the factory itself has gone, many of Pascall’s iconic lines can still be found in sweet shops around the world.
Your Christmas recycling, rubbish and garden waste* collections

Recycling and rubbish collections will change during the weeks commencing 23 December 2019, 30 December 2019 and 6 January 2020. Please note, your collections will take place up to three days LATER than usual.

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<th>Usual collection day</th>
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Please remember to put your recycling and rubbish out by 6am on the day of your collection.

*Garden waste is a chargeable collection service. To sign up, visit merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste

Collections will return to normal from Monday 13 January 2020

Real Christmas tree collections We will be collecting real Christmas trees free of charge. After you have removed all the decorations, place your tree as close to the boundary of your property as possible, making sure that it is visible from the kerbside without blocking access or the pavement. All trees must be out by Monday 13 January and will be collected within a fortnight. Alternatively, you can take your tree to Garth Road Reuse and Recycling Centre in Morden or cut it up and put it in your garden waste wheelie bin, if you are a subscriber to the service.

Garth Road Reuse and Recycling Centre in Morden (SM4 4AX) will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day. On Christmas Eve it will open between 8am and 1pm. It will be open on every other day from 8am to 4pm.

merton.gov.uk/recycling