news and information from your council

my merton

ISSUE 86
SUMMER 2021

Keep Merton Safe
Reopening our borough

Take pride, take part
Protecting our green spaces

Sign up for our email alerts
As we all start to recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the council is committed to doing everything we can to help the borough recover. Whether you live near Mitcham’s famous cricket green or the tennis courts in Wimbledon, no single person or community has been left untouched by this terrible disease. But we are determined to get our wonderful borough back up on to its feet, feeling better than ever.

And we can’t do it without hearing from you what you think the priorities should be. That’s why we’ve launched Your Merton, our biggest ever community conversation (details on page 20). We want to hear from people across the borough what matters to them.

Merton is such a great place to live, work and go to school. What do you like best? Our parks and green spaces? Or perhaps our league-topping schools? And I want to hear the difficult stuff too. What can we do better? How can we build on – and learn from – the community spirit that emerged in lockdown, with so many people working together to help their neighbours?

We enter summer breathing a tentative sigh of relief. As more and more of our friends and family receive the coronavirus vaccine, thanks to the amazing NHS working closely with councils like ours, it feels there is a chance of life returning to normal.

I want to take this opportunity to again thank you all for sticking to social distancing guidelines, for taking regular lateral flow tests, and for helping yourself and everyone around you to stay safe. With a renewed sense of optimism and pride, we can all look forward to the future in Merton, together.

Councillor Mark Allison
Leader of Merton Council

Hannah Doody has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Merton Council, subject to formal ratification by the Full Council in July.

Hannah has been Director of Community and Housing at the authority for the past four years. She has played a key role in the council’s Covid-19 response, as well as being the director lead on London’s response to testing for care home residents, and on providing vital personal protective equipment to staff.

Hannah will take up the role immediately after the appointment is confirmed at the Full Council meeting on July 7.

Hannah said: “I am immensely proud and privileged to have been offered the opportunity to help shape the future of services in a borough I’m both committed to and passionate about.”

Hannah will replace outgoing Chief Executive Ged Curran, who will be retiring from Merton after 17 years at its most senior officer.
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Cover: Kerry Davies, owner of KerryAnn’s Hairdressers and Beauty Salon in Morden with client Vicky Fountain. Photograph by Paul Tanner.

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New Mayor supports carers

The new Mayor of Merton, Councillor Michael Brunt, has dedicated his year in office to supporting and celebrating the work of carers.

Councillor Brunt, who took over the role in May from Councillor Sally Kenny, represents Figge’s Marsh Ward and is a former leader of Merton Council and a former Cabinet Member for the Environment. Councillor Brunt served as the authority’s first ever interim Cabinet Member, covering the Local Environment and Green Spaces portfolio while Councillor Natasha Irons was on maternity leave earlier this year.

To reflect the theme for his year, caring, Councillor Brunt’s chosen charities are Christian CARE Association Merton, which provides emotional support and practical help for people who have no recourse to public funds and Marie Curie, a charity which supports people at the end of their lives and their families.

Councillor Brunt will be supported during the coming year by his consort, his mother, Joan Brunt, and by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Edith Macauley MBE.

All the fun memories of the fair

Do you remember going to Mitcham Fair? Can you recall the excitement of the rides, the smell of candyfloss or the music on the merry-go-round?

If so, Digital Drama would like to record your memories about this historic annual fair. This is for a new heritage project taking place in Mitcham this summer, working with the council’s heritage service to expand its collections and preserve local heritage, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

If you have a memory to share or would like to volunteer to help with the project, please contact Alison Ramsey by email alison@digitaldrama.org or telephone 07525 205148.

By-election result

Helena Dollimore from the Labour Party was elected as St Helier’s new ward councillor with 54% of the vote in a by-election held on 6 May. The turnout was 42%.

Peregrines return

A pair of peregrine falcons returned to their nesting site on the roof of the civic centre in Morden for the sixth year in a row.

The protected birds, which are the fastest species in the world and mate for life, laid four eggs in March, which all hatched a month later.

Since then, the parents have been rearing their hungry chicks and then teaching the fledglings how to hunt.

Watch them live on our webcam.

merton.gov.uk/falcons

Bridge building

Work is continuing to build the new Bishopsford Road bridge over the River Wandle in Mitcham. The council’s contractor, Land & Water, has been constructing abutments at each end of the bridge – these will help to support the arch of the bridge, together with concrete beams, lowered into place by a crane. The single span river crossing, along the A217, will be wider than the previous three-arch bridge, to include a segregated cycle lane, wider pavement and a rain garden. Replacing the original bridge, which had to be demolished for safety reasons last year after partially collapsing in June 2019, following heavy rainfall, is a particularly complex task because it influences river flow and has a range of utilities running through its structure. The new bridge is expected to reopen later this year.
**Summer fun and food**

More free holiday club places will be available this summer for children whose families have struggled the most during the pandemic. School holidays can put extra financial pressure on families because of the increased costs of food and childcare.

Merton is a great place for families and the council is working with the voluntary sector and youth services to increase the number of holiday club places available for children who are eligible for free school meals.

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**Heritage Discovery Day**

Saturday 21 August marks the return of Merton’s popular Heritage Discovery Day – an annual showcase for our borough’s colourful past. The event, from 10.30am to 4pm, will feature photographic displays, children’s activities, heritage trails, quizzes, bitesize local history talks, competitions and online resources. The full 2021 Discovery Day programme will be announced from 24 July.

**find out more**

merton.gov.uk/heritage
or call 020 8545 3239

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**Last chance to apply for EU Settlement Scheme**

There is still time for EU, EEA or Swiss citizens to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) before the deadline on 30 June 2021. The EUSS allows those who had previously been relying on the UK’s membership of the EU for their residency rights to secure settled or pre-settled status.

With settled or pre-settled status, you’ll retain your rights to:

- work in the UK
- enrol in education or study in the UK
- use the NHS for free, if you can at the moment
- access public funds, such as benefits and pensions, if you’re eligible for them
- travel in and out of the UK

You can apply to the EUSS at: gov.uk/eusettledstatus. If you’re struggling with an application, help is available locally from Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth, and the Polish Family Association.

**find out more**

merton.gov.uk/EUSS

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**Children’s cycling courses**

Our popular, free child cycling courses are back this summer, at venues across the borough. We provide Bikeability training at Levels one and two. Your child must be 10 years or over, live or study in Merton and be able to cycle.

**find out more**

www.cyclinginstructor.com

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**Starting school**

Every family who applied for a primary school place in a reception class in Merton this September has received an offer.

Data published by the Pan-London Admissions Board, which co-ordinates school offers, shows that, in Merton, 91.3 per cent of families were allocated a place for their child at one of their top three preferred schools and 95 per cent were offered a place at one of their preferred schools.

Merton is a great place for families and more than 90 per cent of schools in the borough are rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.
Supporting your local high streets

Merton’s high streets are open for business and buzzing again after a year of challenges and uncertainty.

Shops, pubs, restaurants and beauty and hair salons have all been welcoming back their customers, providing the services that the community needs and boosting the local economy.

Customers have a key part to play in the recovery by continuing to support their local shops and businesses – whether that’s popping into the bakery for a loaf of bread, having a haircut at a salon on the nearest parade of shops, enjoying a drink or meal in a local pub and leaving good reviews online.

By shopping locally, residents are helping businesses to recover and safeguarding jobs, which is vital for revitalising our community.

Shopping locally can give consumers a wider choice than national chains can offer. Many small and independent businesses often stock items which are sourced locally and may not be available elsewhere, bringing variety and originality into our high streets. It can also help to reduce our carbon footprint by being close enough to walk or cycle to – a healthy way to enjoy the fresh air and reduce pollution.

Although life is gradually returning to normal, it is still essential to be vigilant and follow Government guidance and measures that local businesses have put in place to keep everyone safe. These include keeping a safe distance, wearing masks if required and washing and sanitising hands frequently. Regular testing continues to be important to stop the spread of the virus, and lateral flow tests are quick and easy to take. Book your test at merton.gov.uk/coronavirus/lateral-flow-test

We all have a part to play in making Merton a great place to live and work, so please show your support for your local high street and businesses.

Satisfied customers

Many companies based in Merton are small businesses and family firms. Here are some ways that you can support them:

**Shop local** - independent shops offer a good choice of essentials and often something a bit different too.

**Leave a review** – support your local businesses with a positive review on sites such as Google, Trustpilot, Tripadvisor, Nextdoor and on social media.

**Go online** – visit their website, place an order, sign up for newsletters and follow and like their social media.

**Buy a gift card** – many independent businesses offer gift cards if you’re stuck for a present idea.

**Spread the word** – even in this day and age word of mouth is still a great way of supporting businesses.

If you have bought a great product, received fantastic customer service or enjoyed a wonderful meal, then tell everyone about it!
Case study: KerryAnn’s

Kerry Davies owns KerryAnn’s Hairdressers and Beauty Salon in Green Lane, Morden. Kerry said: “I have had the hair salon for 21 years and the beauty salon for four years. We specialise in all aspects of hairdressing and beauty services and recently won an award for best salon and best new business in the British Hair and Beauty Awards.

“Lockdown and being closed has been tough, not only financially but also mentally. It was such a worrying time. We missed seeing our clients and people going about their everyday lives. Having that human contact and helping people to feel good again and make them smile has been brilliant.

“We did adapt during lockdown by giving Zoom hair and beauty lessons and doing social media quizzes. We also made free local doorstep deliveries of our products.

“It is absolutely amazing to be back open again. We are really busy and delighted to be doing what we do best for our fantastic customers, who are happy to have us back and to see each other.

“This pandemic has taught me not to take so much for granted and made me realise that my business is more about the people and not just about outstanding hair and beauty treatments – long may it continue.”

Case study: The Sound Lounge

A full programme of summer events has been booked at the vegan restaurant and music bar The Sound Lounge in Morden.

Owner Hannah White said: “We are delighted to be open once again - it has been fantastic to welcome back customers, to enjoy both our food and the live music. We closed at the end of December, when we were put into Tier 4. It was tough and we had to cancel an entire programme of music events, which was hard on our staff and the artists and musicians who were booked to perform.

“We were all quite scared about reopening - worrying whether we could do it, speak to people and deliver a service after what felt like such a long time. We were also worried that nobody would turn up! But it has been brilliant and seeing faces we knew from before lockdown has been amazing. It means so much that people put themselves out to support a local, independent business like ours. It’s really nice to hear how people are too and just to reconnect with the community again.”

Case study: Lu Ma Café

Maria Jessiman owns Lu Ma café in Wimbledon, which she manages with her daughter, Lucy. She said: “It is so good to be back again. We are so happy that our customers are able to enjoy our indoor seating again.

“For all businesses it has been a long up and down year. We closed in March 2020 for the initial lockdown and reopened in June for takeaway, but then we closed again in December and reopened in March. We were able to do takeaways for some of this time, but it’s not the same as being able to see customers in person having fun and enjoying your food.

“It is amazing to see everyone again and it feels so good, especially as we have undergone extensive refurbishment inside and out, which looks great. We know our customers are enjoying being back with us again, especially as summer is here.”
Five minutes with...

Diana Sterck, Chief Executive, Merton Chamber

Merton Chamber is a social enterprise owned by its members, approximately 700 businesses. It operates like any other small business - working with members, organisations and other businesses across the borough. It helps local businesses to set up, develop and also represents them, locally, regionally and nationally - sometimes internationally too.

How long have you been in this role?
I reached my 20-year milestone this May, it’s been a blast!

How has the past year been for businesses in Merton?
It’s been a torrid year for businesses, in the main. Not only have they suffered because of lockdown, they’ve seen a massive drop in sales; had to manage staff working remotely; had staff losing their jobs; had to be Covid compliant when they do reopen and had to make forward plans with little knowledge of what the future holds.

What have been the main challenges?
Covid has really demonstrated to me that most businesses are resilient, very enterprising and very committed to Merton. We’ve lost some and others have downsized enormously, but they will have plans to get back on track as quickly as they can.

How has the Chamber provided support?
In March 2020, we moved very quickly to adapt our service to be totally online. We launched our Reach Out and Connect webinars to bring businesses relevant information and have worked hand in hand with the council and the local Business Improvement Districts on the grants available, how to reopen safely and, importantly, to promote shopping and buying locally – we all want to have a thriving local community!

Are you cautiously optimistic that things will return to ‘normal’ in the future?
I hope that we have all learned from the Covid experience. There are huge opportunities for a green recovery and placing decarbonisation at the heart of business. I’d also like to think we can commit ourselves to shop local, work local and act local to achieve a sustainable future for this wonderful borough. Finally, I hope respect lies at the heart of our individual actions – we have been in this together and I believe the future is #MertonTogether.

find out more For more information about Merton Chamber, visit www.mertonchamber.co.uk
Keeping Merton safely in business

Supporting Merton’s businesses and high streets has been a key priority for the council throughout the Covid-19 restrictions during the past year and continues as we navigate the road out of lockdown. The council has worked with all business sectors in the borough, offering advice and support to help them overcome the challenges they face.

Maria Dane is a Principal Environmental Health Practitioner, who has been working directly with businesses to help them to continue to trade and adapt to new, Covid secure, ways of working.

Maria said: “Businesses have coped remarkably well and have been willing to listen and take on board advice to keep themselves, their staff and their customers safe. We have signposted them to Covid guidance, the council’s website, the online toolkit and how to create a QR code, as well as understanding the legal requirements.”

Recently, Maria’s role has also involved working on producing free online webinars for the retail, close contact and hospitality sectors to help them to move along the roadmap out of lockdown safely. She is also helping the council’s public health team to encourage businesses to undertake regular lateral flow testing of their staff.

Maria said: “As well as helping our businesses to continue to trade, our team, which includes the Covid marshals, have been there to guide them through and keep up to date with all the changes in legislation. My priority has been to maintain face to face contact with businesses, while working outside as much as possible to keep us all safe. I have been very busy doing advisory visits, dealing with complaints and queries relating to Covid-19 and being a Covid-19 Business Champion for Merton. This has involved investigating outbreaks of the virus in workplaces in the borough, including train stations, depots, food places and offices.”

Maria has been an Environmental Health Officer for almost 21 years. Before the pandemic, she concentrated on issues relating to food hygiene inspection, workplace infectious disease investigation and health and safety.

Maria said: “Despite the worry and challenges of the past year, it has been very rewarding to support our businesses and hopefully we have made a difficult year that little bit easier for them.”

For more information about the support available for businesses, visit merton.gov.uk/reopening
Alongside the rollout of the vaccine, regular testing is an essential part of the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, helping to identify variants and stopping individual cases from becoming local outbreaks.

Around one in three people with Covid-19 do not experience any symptoms and may, unwittingly, be spreading the virus. Rapid testing, using what are known as lateral flow tests, detect cases quickly – results take 30 minutes. This means that people who test positive can isolate immediately. By making rapid tests available to everyone, more cases will be detected, breaking chains of transmission and saving lives.

Every Merton resident without Covid-19 symptoms is encouraged to take part in twice-weekly rapid testing. Now we are allowed out and about more, getting tested will mean you are doing your bit to protect those around you.

How to get a test if you DON’T have symptoms

There are several ways for people who live and work in Merton to get a free, rapid Covid-19 test. We recommend getting a supervised test first and then picking up a regular testing kit, once you feel confident doing the test on yourself. Book a supervised test at a participating pharmacy, Morden Assembly Hall or the Civic Centre in Morden.

- Workplace testing is offered by many employers. This may be the best option if you are leaving home to go to work. Ask your employer if they provide rapid tests.
- Secondary school and college students are being given tests to use at home twice a week, throughout term time and the holidays.
- Collect test kits to use at home. You can collect up to two boxes of seven rapid tests to use twice a week at home from:
  - Merton libraries
  - Pharmacies
- Home delivery. If you can’t use the other options, you can order a box of tests online or by calling 119.

If you DO have symptoms, stay at home and get a FREE NHS test

Get a free NHS test and stay at home if you have any of these symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

To book a local, rapid lateral flow test, visit: merton.gov.uk/coronavirus/test
For an NHS symptomatic test: www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Case study: Barry Causer

Barry Causer is Head of Strategic Commissioning in the council’s public health team. He said: “I test regularly as I want to keep my family and community safe. I have kids in the house and my wife works as a teacher in a secondary school, so we want to be as safe as possible at all times. We test together every Wednesday and Sunday night and it’s now just part of our routine, it’s very quick and easy! I would encourage everyone who is working or volunteering or going out and regularly mixing with different households to test, as this is the way to protect those we are working with and our families and friends.”
Dose of hope and gratitude

Six months after the Covid-19 vaccine programme began, tens of thousands of residents across Merton have been offered their jabs, some of which have been given in unusual vaccination centres.

What does having the coronavirus vaccine mean to you? A chance to get back to normal? Being part of the biggest vaccination effort in history? Or helping protect vulnerable family members and the wider community?

More than 10,000 Merton residents have come forward to receive their jab since the first clinic opened at the Wilson Hospital six months ago.

At each session, people have spoken of their excitement, hope and gratitude. Among them is Natalie, who had her vaccination at AFC Wimbledon Stadium in the spring. She said: “It’s a step towards getting our lives back and doing our bit.”

Nadimur was one of more than 1,000 people to be vaccinated in a single day at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in Morden. He said: “We all just want the vaccination because we know it’s our way out of this lockdown and this terrible Covid-19. It means getting back to some sort of normality; meet our family and friends, just having that contact.”

Roaming vaccinators and pop-up clinics go to patients who cannot get to a vaccination centre and have vaccinated hundreds of people in care homes and those who are housebound. Clinics have been held in churches, temples, mosques and community centres too, as well as for homeless people and members of Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities.

“The coronavirus vaccines are safe and effective – helping us bring Covid-19 under control and offering realistic hope of a way out of the pandemic.

Not everyone has found the decision to have the jab an easy one. To offer reassurance and keep people informed, the NHS has organised more than 50 events in Merton, attracting more than 1,100 participants – from college students to older people, faith groups to community champions. At each session, local doctors, nurses and other health professionals were on hand to answer a range of questions.

Vaccination clinics have been held in some unexpected places, including in a former clothes store in Centre Court Shopping Centre, Wimbledon. The vaccination centre in Plough Lane gave the public a first glimpse of AFC Wimbledon’s new ground, before fans had been allowed in.
Get fitter and healthier

With summer holidays on the horizon, now is the perfect time to kick start some healthier lifestyle changes and there is plenty of support available to help Merton residents to make this summer a healthy one.

If the last year has taught us anything, it is that now is more important than ever to look after our health and wellbeing. Covid-19 has affected everyone in different ways – physically, emotionally, financially and psychologically.

Better Health Merton is a resource for people who live, work or are registered with a GP in Merton. It provides a range of free ideas, self-care tips and support, from preparing nutritious recipes to taking up a new type of exercise.

Getting started is often the hardest part, so here are some simple ways to take the first steps towards a healthier routine.

**Move More**

With all the restrictions in place over the last year, gyms and leisure centres closed and the winter weather keeping many of us at home, we haven’t all been able to take as much exercise as we would have liked to have done. With the sunshine on our side again, there are lots of great ways to keep active outdoors.

One You Merton offers tips for complete beginners, including a couch to 5k running app, and new ideas for people resuming their workouts after a break. Wimbledon Guild, Merton Moves and Age UK Merton are also offering a range of activities.

Here are our top tips to find the type of exercise which is right for you:

- Choose activities you enjoy – this can really help you keep up your new healthier routine.
- Set simple goals and make a plan – moving more with friends and family can make exercise fun.
- Start slowly and build up – listen to your body, you may need to do a warm up for some activities. Only do what feels comfortable, particularly if you have a health condition.
- Enjoy the outdoors – getting outside can help to reduce anxiety.
- Wear comfortable clothes and always stay hydrated.

**Healthy eating**

Maintaining a balanced diet and a healthy weight can increase your energy, boost your mood and strengthen your immune system.

Nearly two thirds (63%) of adults in the UK are overweight or living with obesity. Sometimes it can be hard to think of new meal ideas and count calories, but One You Easy Meals can be a real lifesaver! This free app is packed with delicious, easy, calorie counted recipes, for if you’re ever short of inspiration. You can download the app on Apple or Google Play Store. 🍎

**Walk4life**

The council is leading free healthy walks in parks and open spaces. These are suitable for all ages and fitness levels and no booking is required. Find out more at merton.gov.uk/walk4life

Leisure centres open

Our three leisure centres, in Morden, Wimbledon and at the Canons in Mitcham, are open again and are welcoming customers, who are asked to book in advance and arrive activity ready to resume their workouts or to try a new sport. www.better.org.uk/merton
We’re here for you

With Covid-19 restrictions easing, friends and families are meeting up and getting back out and about in our vibrant borough. However, we recognise that there are many residents who are unable to take these next steps and still need support from us. My Merton finds out about the help that’s available, to ensure no one feels alone.

As we continue through 2021 and work towards recovery and the prospect of a return to a more normal way of life after Covid-19, we must not forget that for many people this journey will take much longer. These include people who have lost loved ones, those recovering from the virus, the clinically vulnerable, who have isolated for over a year, and those who have struggled with their mental health due to lockdown.

If you, or someone you know has been affected by pandemic, there is plenty of support available. The Merton community is here for you.

Merton’s Covid-19 Community Response Hub

Provides help to isolated households.

- Support with shopping and basic supplies
- Access to prescription and medication
- Support to access advice on money and benefits
- Advice and practical help to stay active and independent at home
- Telephone befriending

If you, or someone you know needs help, email help@mvsc.co.uk or call 020 8685 2272, between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Domestic violence

The council’s One Stop Shop continues to provide vital support for residents suffering from domestic violence. To speak to a Merton Independent Domestic Violence Advisor, call 020 7801 1777. For information on the Rape Crisis Live Chat Helpline, visit www.rapecrisis.org.uk. Call 999 if you are in danger.

Mental health

The One You Merton website is full of helpful tips on how to improve your wellbeing. It also has expert advice from Every Mind Matters, to help you look after your mental health if you are feeling low or worried about Covid-19. Visit: www.oneyoumerton.org

Money and benefits

There are many organisations that can provide help if you’ve been affected by coronavirus. Support includes: Council Tax Support, Covid-19 winter grant scheme, Local Welfare Support scheme and Turn2Us. To find out more, visit merton.gov.uk/coronavirus/residents

Food banks

No one in our community should have to face going hungry. If you have reached crisis point and need help, contact Wimbledon Foodbank. Visit their website, wimbledon.foodbank.org.uk or call 0808 2082138 for free (open Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm).
At Merton we support our foster carers using an innovative approach called Mockingbird Family Model (MFM). 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

Our Foster Carers change children’s and young people’s lives – could you be one of them?

To find out more at our Information Sessions
Call us today on 0800 073 0874 / 020 8545 4070
visit merton.gov.uk/fostering
email fostering@merton.gov.uk
Follow us on Facebook: Merton Fostering

At Merton we support our foster carers using an innovative approach called Mockingbird Family Model (MFM).
Improving choices for those with learning disabilities

The voices of people with learning disabilities, their families and their carers will be at the heart of shaping future services to meet their needs.

We are inviting people with learning disabilities, their families, carers and the professionals who support them to have their say on the future of day opportunities, as part of an ambitious engagement programme to improve services in the community.

The council wants to improve choices for people with learning disabilities by providing day opportunities across the borough that are relevant and meaningful to those who use the services, and support their independence as much as possible.

Working together with social enterprise Community Catalysts, the council is inviting everyone to participate in the Big Conversation – an engagement process that started in May and will end in mid-July.

As part of the Big Conversation, people with learning disabilities, their families, carers and supporting professionals will have the opportunity to express their views about current day, evening and weekend services.

There are various ways for residents to contribute, including accessible and easy read paper surveys and online surveys on the council’s website, in addition to virtual and in-person one-to-one conversations and meetings. There are also ways for people who don’t use speech or the internet to engage in the process.

This service review is committed to providing people with a learning disability a better choice in – and more control over – the services the council provides for them, reflective of changing needs and opportunities. It is about creating a model of care for people with different levels of need and preferences.

There are a range of options online, including arranging meetings in small groups.

For further information and to fill in the survey online, visit Merton Council’s website merton.gov.uk/have-your-say-ld.

Anyone who would like to take part and has no internet access, can call Debbie John from Community Catalysts on 07990 515632.
Discover more of Merton this summer

Merton is the place to be this summer! Beautiful parks and open spaces hosting events and entertainment, plus wonderful places to visit with friends and activities to keep the kids amused, all in the heart of your borough. So, with so many of us planning a staycation this year, why not discover more of Merton.

Love your parks

To celebrate Love Your Parks Week (12–21 July), visit one of the 100 plus parks and recreation grounds that make Merton one of the greenest boroughs in London. Four sites appear on the prestigious Historic England register for their historic and horticultural significance, including Cannizaro Park, Morden Hall Park, South Park Gardens and Wimbledon Park – famously created by the eminent landscape designer, Lancelot Capability Brown.

John Innes Park is one of six local parks to achieve the Green Flag Award, an international mark of quality, environmental standards and excellent facilities. Other recipients include the Abbey, Colliers Wood and Dundonald recreation grounds, South Park Gardens and the Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields. Discover more about your local park, including walking and cycling routes, wildlife and history at goparks.london/merton

Help keep our parks clean by taking your litter home
Events are back in Merton this summer!

Join our what’s on newsletter and be the first to know about the latest events in Merton: merton.gov.uk/newsletter

The Luna Cinema is returning to Wimbledon Park from 30 July to 1 August

After months of staying indoors watching movies on the small screen, it’s time to head outside for an unforgettable big screen experience. The programme of films for 2021 includes the must-see modern murder mystery Knives Out, 80s Tom Cruise classic Top Gun and the sing-along version of the smash-hit movie musical The Greatest Showman. All tickets must be booked in advance and, due to social distancing capacities, are limited, so book your place early to avoid missing out! Book: thelunacinema.com/wimbledon-park

Beautiful People Festival* is coming to Morden Park on Saturday 4 September

Presented by the team behind the legendary Southport Weekender, the Beautiful People Festival is an expertly-curated mix of DJs and live acts spanning music genres such as US/Afro/Deep & Soulful House, Disco, Soul, UK Garage, R&B, Reggae and Hip Hop. With over 70 artists such as Basement Jaxx, David Rodigan, Arrested Development, Grandmaster Flash & Louie Vega, this is one of the highlights of the festival calendar in London. Book: beautifulpeoplefestival.com

Dino Kingdom* in Morden Park from 14 to 30 August

Dino Kingdom, is a spectacular outdoor dinosaur experience aimed at family audiences with impressive installations of 100 true to life moving and roaring dinosaurs and creatures. Immersive 3D, AR, and Projection Mapping technology makes Dino Kingdom the most unique event of its kind. With many more activities and immersive elements of the kingdom to explore, Dino Kingdom is an experience that people of any age can enjoy. More details to be confirmed nearer the time. For the latest updates, sign up for our What’s On in Merton newsletter merton.gov.uk/newsletter

Stay safe this summer by following all the latest Covid-19 guidelines: merton.gov.uk/coronavirus

If you have any Covid-19 symptoms, stay at home and get a test.

Things to do with the kids

Download our Discover Merton activity sheet and inspire your kids to try a new experience

To help occupy your kids during the school holidays, we’ve put together the Discover Merton activity sheet. It will encourage them to become a tourist for the day and follow the Wimbledon Way route and then find a water wheel in Merton Abbey Mills. They can even transport themselves back in time and follow a heritage trail though Mitcham. Or maybe they can pretend to be a farmer at Deen City Farm or discover the new playground at Canons House and Grounds in Mitcham. Visit: merton.gov.uk/LoveMerton

Make a splash

Being out on the water is a great way to spend a hot summer’s day. The council’s watersports centre has plenty of activities for the whole family to choose from, including kayaking, windsurfing and sailing. You can book one to one tuition, paddlesports group sessions, plus sailing and powerboating courses for adults and school holiday sessions for children. To book an activity, visit: merton.gov.uk/watersports

City farming

Goats, pigs, sheep and an alpaca are among the animals ready to welcome families back to one of London’s oldest city farms. Deen City Farm, a charity which the council helps to fund, has a range of birds and livestock, including some animals born earlier this year. The farm, which is also home to a riding school, runs alongside part of the River Wandle and the Wandle Trail. This popular walking route is a journey through some of the fascinating history of the borough. Book your visit: deencityfarm.co.uk

Wild World Heroes

Wild World Heroes is the theme of this year’s Summer Reading Challenge, which is being run by the council’s award-winning libraries. Children aged between four and 11 aim to read six or more paper books or ebooks borrowed during the summer holidays to be in with a chance to win rewards and a certificate on completion of the challenge. Why not read each of your books in the six gardens at Cannizaro Park! Register: merton.gov.uk/libraries

*Subject to licencing
Take pride and LOVE where you live

Our outdoor spaces have proved more important than ever before this past year. But, as lockdown measures have eased, we’ve seen a minority of people abuse our parks and streets with littering and fly-tips. We need the community to help us fight against this unacceptable behaviour and take pride in their borough. *My Merton* finds out how we can all Love Merton and do our bit to keep it tidy.

We cleared nearly 16,000 fly-tips from Merton’s streets in the last 12 months, 96% of these within 24 hours of being reported. Every penny we spend picking up litter, including black bags next to bins and large items, such as mattresses, which people have dumped on the street, could be used for vital services like social care for our most vulnerable residents.

Most people don’t realise that putting a rubbish bag or two next to a street litter bin is actually fly-tipping. It might feel like it’s okay because they’re next to the bin, but it’s an environmental offence that could result in a heavy fine or a conviction. This is because one bag attracts several bags, which is not only unsightly for the community, but the bags get ripped open by animals and their contents blown across the street. We know that most people do the right thing and dispose of their rubbish responsibly. We take action against those who don’t.

These fines are in addition to the thousands of £150 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) we issue for dropping litter and cigarette ends as well as dog fouling. More serious offences, or failure to pay the fines, could result in a criminal record.

There’s no need to dump rubbish of any kind. If you can’t manage to take your bulky waste to our household reuse and recycling centre at Garth Road, we can collect it for you. Visit our website for more information, including which items we collect, pricing and how to book.

Largely, our community care about Merton and where they live and want to keep it tidy. But when a small minority of people think it is okay to leave their litter in our parks and on our streets, we have teams of Waste Warriors who come together to fight the litter. These wonderful volunteers work with the council and Sustainable Merton to carry out group and individual clean-ups in their local area.

Recycle on the go in Wimbledon town centre

We’ve teamed up with Sustainable Merton and Hubbub, with support from local organisations including Love Wimbledon, to launch the #InTheLoop recycling trial, which is being funded by evian water. Look out for the colourful bins to recycle your plastic bottles and drinks cans and prevent them from ending up in the general waste.

The initiative will run throughout the Wimbledon Championships to encourage people visiting the borough during the tennis fortnight, which runs from 28 June–11 July, to recycle more too.
Here’s how you can do your bit:

**Make sure** your household waste and recycling containers are on the boundary of your property by 6am on your collection day. Please do not leave rubbish in the street on other days and never put household waste in litter bins.

**Bank holiday collections**
Recycling and rubbish collections are currently scheduled to continue as normal on the August bank holiday. Check our website nearer the time.

**Feeling inspired?** Visit our Love Merton webpage for information on how to report full litter bins and fly-tips. Request a new waste or recycling container, book our bulky waste service or find out how you can be part of Merton’s new Love Merton campaign. [merton.gov.uk/LoveMerton](http://merton.gov.uk/LoveMerton) to get involved.

**Be considerate** and clear up after yourself when using a park or an open space. If the bins are full, don’t leave bags of rubbish next to them, as this can be blown across the park or street - take your rubbish home.

**Become a Waste Warrior** and make changes to your lifestyle to reduce waste and recycle more. You could also organise or take part in a community clean up.
Our way of life has changed beyond recognition during the last year, as a result of Covid-19. The pandemic has impacted us in different ways and transformed our daily lives. We’ve all spent time closer to home and that has been an opportunity for many of us to rediscover the borough, including the abundance of green spaces on our doorstep and our local high streets. A renewed sense of community has seen us through these difficult times, bringing the borough together to help our most vulnerable residents.

Now that restrictions are lifting and life is slowly returning to something like normal, we are thinking about the future. After the pandemic, we know that things will never return to exactly how they were before, but how do you think that the future of our borough should look?

To find out, we have launched Your Merton, the biggest conversation that the council has ever held to ask as many people as possible to share their insights with us. We want to understand more about people’s views, ideas and experiences of living, working and studying in Merton and their ambitions for the future.

We are asking where the places are in Merton which mean the most to you and why. Our dedicated website has a community heat map, allowing you to comment on specific geographic locations across the borough.

There is also an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on your local area and how your daily life has changed over the last year. We want to hear about your experiences during the pandemic, how you have adapted to new ways of working and studying and which of the changes you would like to keep in place in the future.

The council – like all of us – is trying to work out what changes to keep, and how to adapt to a post-pandemic Britain.

Whether it’s changing the way we travel or work, a desire to spend more time outside, or changes to the way we want essential services to be delivered, all of us have an idea on what we want our futures to look like. Your Merton is an opportunity for you to tell us what you think, what you want and what you don’t want. Our job is to listen, understand what’s changed for people, and then build our priorities around people’s views. We want to hear from as many people as possible – whether you have lots of ideas to share or just a few comments.

The council is running a series of discussion groups with organisations including faith groups, young peoples’ groups, charities and community partners to ensure that we reach groups who may not always take part in the council’s consultations. In the spring, we carried out our bi-annual residents’ survey – a random sample of people from across the borough.

All of these responses will be drawn together to help us plan ahead to shape the future of the borough you want, forming the basis of a long-term vision for the council and our partners which is rooted in the ambitions and experiences of local people.
Tell us how your life changed during the pandemic

Tell us where in Merton is important to you

Tell us how Merton could work in the future

Tell us what your daily life is like in Merton

Tell what is important in Merton in the future

Join the conversation at merton.gov.uk/YourMerton
Introducing your Cabinet

When Councillor Mark Allison became Council Leader in November, he announced a record-breaking cabinet, who are the most ambitious and diverse in the borough’s 65 year history. Two thirds of cabinet members are women and more than half are from a black or ethnic minority. There are now two joint deputy leaders, instead of one. As well as representing their ward, each cabinet member is responsible for a particular portfolio and for the first time there is a cabinet member with Climate Emergency in their title.

So, who are the people making the decisions which make Merton a great place for families, ensure that the council is run in a business-like way and help to bridge the gap between the east and west of the borough? My Merton asked all our cabinet members to tell us a bit about themselves.

**Councillor Mark Allison**

*Leader of the Council*

I volunteer at a food bank in Mitcham, after having helped run one with my wife, a charity worker in Pollards Hill.

*Why did you decide to become a councillor?* Because I was asked! I’m interested in helping the community and want everyone to benefit from living in a great place. A friend thought I’d be good at it, and convinced me to apply.

*Where is your favourite place in your ward, Lavender Fields?* The water play area opposite Figge’s Marsh is a great spot, bringing enjoyment to children and families – and it’s free.

*What difference do you hope to make to Merton?* Merton is a great place with a great community and great facilities, and my job is to help the many fantastic people who work hard to keep it that way.

*Tell us a fascinating fact about you.* I once scored a goal at Stamford Bridge against Welsh international goalie Neville Southall.

**Councillor Eleanor Stringer**

*Cabinet Member for Children and Education and Joint Deputy Leader*

I work in education, funding projects for disadvantaged pupils. I live in South Wimbledon, and my daughter attends a local primary school.

*Why did you decide to become a councillor?* I wanted to get to know my local community more, and play a role in making sure Merton continues to be a great place for children to grow up in.

*Where is your favourite place in your ward, Abbey?* I’d struggle to pick one, but I do love The Sultan pub. A great family-friendly pub that really benefits the local community.

*What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area?* I want young people’s voices to be heard in decisions affecting them, and to ensure all young people, no matter what their background, have access to the support they need to thrive.

*Tell us a fascinating fact about you.* As a child, my sister and I did a bit of modelling. Nothing exciting, but my hand was on a shower gel advert!

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**Could you stand for election to be a councillor?**

Do you want to influence the way local public services are planned and provided? Have you thought about representing your community? Have you considered becoming a councillor?

Whether you are a parent, a student, retired, in a full time job, run your own business, or anything in between – all sorts of people become councillors, so why not you? Elections for Merton Council happen every four years and the next election is due to be held in May 2022. You do not need to be a member of a political party to stand for election – you can become an independent councillor.

The role of a councillor is very varied, from attending council meetings and helping people in your ward to resolving issues and getting more involved in the community.

Problem solving, communication and knowledge of the area are all important skills to have as a councillor, although no formal qualifications are required.

*Find out more*

[www.beacouncillor.org.uk](http://www.beacouncillor.org.uk)
**Councillor Owen Pritchard**
Cabinet Member for Performance, Recovery and the Local Economy and Joint Deputy Leader

Veteran, public servant and small business owner who moved to South London in 1998 and never looked back.

**Why did you decide to become a councillor?** To serve.

**Where is your favourite place in your ward, Cricket Green?**
The cricket green in the summer, the war memorial in November.

**What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area?** I want to help both the council and the community recover from the pandemic, in particular I want to support local businesses as they fight to retain local jobs.

**Tell us a fascinating fact about you.** I once had tea with the Queen, and once watched the Simpsons with Prince Harry, but not on the same day.

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**Councillor Natasha Irons**
Cabinet Member for Local Environment and Green Spaces

Wife, mum and Mitchamite, who is a school governor and works in marketing.

**Why did you decide to become a councillor?** Moving to Merton as a child changed the course of my life for the better. I wanted an opportunity to serve the community that had given me so much.

**Where is your favourite place in your ward, Moreton Green?**
It’s an oasis-like green space surrounded by a community of neighbours who really look out for each other.

**What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area?** My ambition is to work with our community to create a cleaner and greener Merton.

**Tell us a fascinating fact about you.** I lived in Vancouver for a year.

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**Councillor Agatha Akyigyina**
Cabinet Member for Partnership, Public Safety and Tackling Crime

I have a loving family. I also volunteer for various groups, including the street pastors, and I love the community.

**Why did you decide to become a councillor?** I decided to become a councillor because I wanted to help people in the community who needed help from someone they could trust in local government.

**Where is your favourite place in your ward, Figge’s Marsh?**
The town centre — I meet so many wonderful people there who make up the community.

**What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area?** I hope to make the partnership between the community and the police stronger, where they feel they can both work together to tackle any issues the community. Therefore, this makes Merton safer for all.

** Tell us a fascinating fact about you.** My mother and father were very strong activists who fought for Ghana independence.

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**Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah**
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Skills

I was born in Liberia, West Africa and have two adult daughters. I am a Christian and I work as an internal auditor.

**Why did you decide to become a councillor?** I have always been active in my community. I thought the best way to make a difference was to represent my community on the council to ensure their views are heard and considered in decision making.

**Where is your favourite place in your ward, Colliers Wood?**
Colliers Wood is a great place to live with two lovely parks, Colliers Wood Rec and Wandle Park. These are very popular with residents.

**What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area?** Up-skill young people and residents whose jobs are affected by Covid-19, so they are ready for work when we recover from the pandemic. Work in support of our leisure and culture partners to help them recover.

**Tell us a fascinating fact about you.** I love to bake, but don’t often follow recipes precisely. My experimental bakes always turn out great, somehow!
Being a councillor

Councillor Rebecca Lanning
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health
I work in health policy, focusing on cancer, heart failure and asthma. I am also a Governor at St George’s Hospital.

Why did you decide to become a councillor? My parents dedicated their careers to giving back to the community. They inspired me to do what I can to improve individual lives, experiences and the environment of the borough in which I was born and raised.

Where is your favourite place in your ward, Cricket Green? Mitcham Cricket Green itself. The world’s oldest cricket ground, surrounded by nature, listed buildings and rich in heritage.

What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area? Covid-19 has exposed unacceptable inequalities in society. Tackling them goes to the heart of what I want to achieve, from a sustainable solution to food insecurity, to improving the air we breathe.

Tell us a fascinating fact about you. I’m half Sri-Lankan. Colombo, where most of my family live, is my second home.

Councillor Martin Whelton
Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration, and the Climate Emergency
I have served on Merton Council since 2002. I live in Mitcham and am a campaigns officer for a trade union.

Why did you decide to become a councillor? The opportunity to make a difference in my local community by acting as a voice and a champion for local people and to make improvements which lead to a better quality of life.

Where is your favourite place in your ward, Pollards Hill? Seven Islands on Mitcham Common, which is an oasis of tranquillity, beauty and nature.

What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area? To implement measures which put the climate emergency at the forefront of all our work and protect the environment for future generations.

Tell us a fascinating fact about you. I was elected as the youngest Mayor of Merton and the only one born in the borough.

Councillor Tobin Byers
Cabinet Member for Finance
I was first elected in 2014. I work in law and am Chair of the Board of Trustees at Age UK Merton.

Why did you decide to become a councillor? After first moving to the borough in 2009, Merton became my home. I wanted to play an active part in the community to make Merton the best it can be for all who live and work here.

Where is your favourite place in your ward, Graveney? Graveney benefits from a central green space – Edenvale Play Space – and is adjacent to Figge’s Marsh. Both are hubs for the community.

What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area? To continue to support those in our community who need it most through council tax support and other measures, particularly as families continue to struggle as a result of the pandemic.

Tell us a fascinating fact about you. Both my parents hated their middle names so much that neither my sister nor I were given one.

Councillor Marsie Skeete
Cabinet Member for Women and Equalities
I am a mother of one and I am fixed on fighting for equality for all, regardless of race, colour, creed, religion and political affiliation. I will fight for equality until my last breath.

Why did you decide to become a councillor? I decided to serve the residents with the same treatment I received when I was in need. The MP for Mitcham and Morden helped me with a problem. My time as a councillor has so far been excellent and I hope to do more, given the circumstances.

Where is your favourite place in your ward, Longthornton. My favourite place in the ward is Missen Corner, it provides a space for residents to come to reflect on many things of the past and it also provides a place of peace to reflect and move forward.

What difference do you hope to make to Merton in your portfolio area? I would like to implement an open place for residents to express themselves freely and where we can all be “friends” in a real world.

Tell us a fascinating fact about you. I am great in the kitchen. I love cooking. Just tell me what you want and I can cook it for you!
feature

Action on climate change

Taking action to become a net-zero carbon borough

Since declaring a climate emergency, it has been one of the council’s top priorities to reduce carbon emissions, both within the organisation, and in the borough as a whole. My Merton finds out how we can all do our bit to help.

As part of our Climate Strategy and Action Plan, we aim to make the council a net-zero carbon organisation by 2030, and to make Merton a net-zero carbon borough by 2050. Reaching our net-zero carbon goals will require a huge effort from everyone in the borough. Throughout 2021, we’ll be encouraging everyone in Merton to join the effort to make the borough carbon neutral by taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Each month, we’ll be focussing on a different theme, looking at ways we can all tackle climate change. If you’re inspired to make a difference, you can pledge to make one or more changes – some big, some small – to your routines and habits.

Here’s a taste of some of the themes, and the pledges that Merton residents have already made:

April
Buildings and energy

Spring is often the time we start making home improvements, so we encouraged local residents and businesses to think about making their home or business more energy efficient, investing in low carbon technologies or switching to a green energy supplier. These actions will help reduce energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels for electricity and heating.

May
Active travel

As the weather improved and Covid restrictions have eased, it’s the perfect time to get active and enjoy the outdoors. Walking and cycling improves your fitness, helps to make you happier and is low cost. Reducing the number of car journeys not only cuts carbon emissions, but it also reduces congestion and air pollution, making the borough a healthier and more pleasant place to live.

June
Reducing waste

One of the best ways to reduce your carbon footprint is to reduce the amount you throw away. Whether it’s the carbon associated with the production and transportation of brand new goods, or the emissions caused by incinerated waste, there are plenty of good reasons to cut down on waste. There are many ways to do this, including avoiding single-use items, steering clear of unnecessary packaging and recycling and upcycling instead of throwing things in the bin. It’s not just the planet you could save, you might save money too.

Get involved

You can explore each month’s theme, and make your own pledges at merton.gov.uk/ClimatePledges. Don’t worry if you’re not interested by the current month’s theme, you can still make pledges from previous themes at any time of the year.
Live Festival on Wimbledon Common

Sunset: 15-19 Sept 2021

Book tickets at wimbledonbookfest.org

Outside in ‘sides-up’ marquees - Social distanced audiences
Library group make some noise to tackle loneliness

An innovative performance project in Merton Arts Space, which is championed by a legendary guitarist, has been striking the right chord with residents who have experienced loneliness.

Since 2019, Tuned In – a project aimed at combating loneliness in Merton – has been running jam sessions at the Merton Arts Space in Wimbledon Library. The project is a collaboration between Merton Council and the renowned musician Jah Wobble (aka John Wardle), the original bassist from Public Image Ltd, who has also worked with the likes of Brian Eno, Bjork, Primal Scream and Sinead O’Connor among many others, who facilitates each session with Jon Klein (ex-Siouxsie and the Banshees and Sinead O’Connor band).

The project targets men, particularly those in the age group 50+ – where loneliness is at its highest – but is open and accessible to all. Each session allows participants to share and develop musical skills and gain knowledge, as well as helping individuals build social connections and friendship groups.

However, since the pandemic prevented in-person sessions from taking place, the project has moved online with a focus on music production.

Now, one year after the lockdown came into force, participants have used their enhanced digital skills to record a number of songs ready for a commercial music release. The first single, called Uptown Lockdown, from the upcoming album was released by Cherry Red Records in March and the next single, Tuned In, will be released on 2 July.

Previous jam sessions can also be viewed on the project’s YouTube channel (search for Tuned In_LDN).

Commenting on the project, Jah Wobble said: “Tuned In is close to my heart, it’s as if I have helped form a club that I am now part of. I’m really proud of the whole group for putting their heart and soul into this album.

“Uptown Lockdown is a song that explores modernity and this strange shared experience we’ve all had over the last year, and Tuned In is a song that gives a flavour of what our little club is about. I’d encourage everyone to download these songs and the upcoming album to support the project.”

For further information to and listen to the singles, visit: merton.gov.uk/tunedin
Living Well with St Raphael’s

Living well and being able to do the things that make life enjoyable is so important to all of us. When you have a condition that impacts your health, it is not always an easy thing to be able to do.

On May 19th, St Raphael’s will be launching The Living Well programme, which focuses on health promotion and wellbeing in an informal, friendly environment. The eight-week programme can be accessed by anyone with a life limiting or long-term condition, their relative/carer. Sessions include; nutrition, how to improve sleep, relaxation, management of breathlessness and anxiety, as well as information about benefits, other practical support and an opportunity to socialise.

We are aware how easy it is to feel isolated and disconnected from everyday things when you are not feeling at your best. It can also be difficult to find the services that will support you and those that are important to you. Sheila, Simon and Katie are inviting you to visit the Wellbeing Centre and to access the Living Well Programme.

You can contact us directly at St Raphael’s Wellbeing Centre on 020 8099 1722 or Email: wellbeingcentre@straphaels.org.uk

How you can help

One of the great positives to be taken from this last very difficult period is how our community has rallied round to support neighbours, the NHS and charities, including St Raphael’s. This is such a hopeful sign for the future and something precious we must make every effort to encourage even after the crisis has receded.

There are many ways that local people support St Raphael’s with volunteering. Some offer practical help with administration or by using their specialist skills, like IT or gardening; others volunteer in our shops or by driving the van. We have many volunteer roles within our Fundraising Team and we hope to grow a team of lottery volunteers to help raise the funds we need every year.

If you could help support us by volunteering in any capacity, please get in touch, by calling 020 8099 7777, and we can talk about the opportunities and the training offered.

www.straphaels.org.uk  Registered charity no: 1182636
Holly hedges and a generous spirit...

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the John Innes Society, but what do we know of the man himself? My Merton looks at the life and work of John Innes, property developer, farming enthusiast and philanthropist.

John Innes was born in Hampstead in 1829 and educated in Brighton, before starting a career as a London wine merchant. However, in 1864 he founded the City of London Property Company with his brother, James. This bought land in Merton, where Innes founded the Merton Park Estate Company with a view to developing the area.

It was John’s ambition to create one of the first garden suburbs and he employed Henry Goodall Quartermain as the first estate architect. From 1870 onwards, he designed a range of large houses flanking wide roads including Mostyn Road, Kingswood Road and part of Dorset Road in Merton Park.

Quartermain also redesigned Manor Farm, the property in Watery Lane which Innes had purchased as his home. This later became known as Manor House.

Innes even succeeded in changing the name of the station from Lower Merton to Merton Park, more befitting of a high status suburb.

Innes took a keen interest in local affairs, serving as a JP and churchwarden for the parish church. As a charity trustee, he was one of the driving forces behind the foundation of Rutlish Science School in 1895. This was built using funds accumulated from an original seventeenth century bequest by William Rutlish, Court Embroiderer to Charles II.

Innes funded construction of the Masonic Hall in Kingston Road, which hosted a range of cultural events, as well as the adjacent Manor Club, which offered a varied programme of lectures and meetings.

Innes was a farming enthusiast and bought Morden Hall Farm in 1868. Keen on breeding livestock, Innes took particular pride in his award-winning pigs.

When Innes died in 1904, four of his large farm horses pulled the wagon conveying his coffin to St. Mary’s Church in Merton Park. The church interior had already been redesigned at his request and the churchyard, where he was buried, landscaped.

Under the terms of John’s will, most of the grounds of Manor House became John Innes Park, which opened in 1909. The following year, the John Innes Horticultural Institution opened, pioneering work in plant development.

The Merton Park estate became a conservation area in 1968 and in 1971 the John Innes Society was founded to safeguard this unique garden suburb. To mark its 50th anniversary, the society will be staging an autumn exhibition. www.johninnessociety.org.uk

find out more
Help the NHS and social care services by returning unused equipment

If you have items such as a bath lift, shower chair, or perching stool, which are no longer needed, please arrange a free collection by Croydon Community Equipment Service, which works in partnership with Merton Council. Your unused equipment will be safety checked and deep cleaned, so that it can be used to help someone else live more independently.

To arrange a free collection, email cesadmin@croydon.gov.uk or call 020 8664 8860

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
• Creating a Business Start-up
See website for the full list of courses

Eligibility
You need to have lived in the EU for three years and be aged 19+. You will need to be confident with written English in order to meet the required standards.
For further information please contact martina.collett@stcg.ac.uk

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
• English, ESOL and Maths
• Hairdressing
• Languages
• Music
• Musical Instrument Making and Repair
• Photography
• Pilates
• 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. 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 stcg.ac.uk/merton

Merton College, London Road, Morden, SM4 5QX
020 8918 7777
United against hate crime

Two Merton football clubs have become third party reporting centres for hate crime. *My Merton* finds out how they are helping to raise awareness of hate crime and what support is available for people who have experienced it.

Footballers from two Merton clubs have teamed up to say no to hate crime. AFC Wimbledon and Tooting and Mitcham United have both become third party reporting centres for hate crime. Staff have been trained to assist people with submitting a report to the police and can make a report on their behalf.

A hate crime is a criminal offence which is perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person’s actual or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation or religion or because they are transgender.

Being the target of hate crime not only affects the victim, but their friends and family too. It can also erode the victim’s sense of belonging in the community – this is unacceptable and Merton Council, along with the police and other partner organisations, has zero tolerance of hate crime.

With the help of schemes here in Merton, such as our Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Centres and Hate Crime Advice Surgeries, we can support victims and make it easier to take action against perpetrators.

**Reporting hate crime**

All hate crime is unacceptable and no incident should go unreported. Many victims do not report their experiences because they are scared, worried about not being believed, or think that there is nothing that can be done.

By reporting incidents, you help us to understand and respond to hate crime in the borough. Your report can help us find out where things happen and how they happen. We can then help you and others.

There are a number of ways to report hate crime, either directly to the police or through a third party.

**Police**

You can report incidents to the police directly:

- In an emergency, call 999
- Report a crime on the Met Police website: www.met.police.uk

**Other ways to report hate crime**

The organisations and services below offer ways to report incidents without having to talk directly to the police.

- **True Vision** provides information about hate crime or incidents and how to report it. It is police funded and allows you to submit a report to your local police force.
- **The Self Evident app** from Witness Confident allows you to report a crime and capture evidence at the same time. You can take videos, pictures and record audio, and have it all kept in one place.
- **Crimestoppers** is a national organisation that allows victims or anyone with any information about crime to report it anonymously.

For a full list of third party reporting centres and their contact details, plus more information on hate crime, visit our website merton.gov.uk/hatecrime.
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