Mini musicians start to play
Find activities in your Borough of Sport
The council’s magazine has had a makeover. ‘My Merton’ is now called ‘In Merton’, and brings a modern, fresh, new look and feel. We hope you love it – and find it easier and more engaging to read.

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**News**
The latest stories from around the borough

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Developing new homes

**Borough of Sport**
Your activity finder

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Investing in neighbourhoods and climate action

**Council budget**
Protecting frontline services and investing in communities

**Mini Musicians**
Discovering the joy of playing music

**Carnival time**
Save the date for our popular summer event

**Fostering**
Could you foster a child?
Welcome to your new-look magazine

Spring is a time for new beginnings and as daffodils bloom along the Wandle Trail, where the council has made improvements to the footpath and wildlife habitats, I am excited that the council is breaking ground on new projects that will benefit people living in Merton.

Everyone should have a safe, secure and warm home, but this is not a reality for many in our borough. The council wants to change that, which is why the council will soon begin preparing a site in Morden, where the first council homes in a generation will be built. But the council can’t tackle the housing crisis alone. That’s why I was pleased to attend the recent groundbreaking event on the Eastfields estate, which is providing more, much-needed, modern new homes for the people who live there.

I’m proud to be from Merton, but, like so many of you, I want our borough to be better so that everyone who lives and works here can take pride in it. The council has just announced the recipients of our latest round of Civic Pride Funding for neighbourhood projects and initiatives to tackle climate change, which will invest in living green walls and food gardens in schools, an eco-friendly community playground, retrofitting a scout hall, library in the park, a rain garden, an outdoor gym and creating opportunities for people aged 50 and over to be more active.

These last two will be added to the council’s activity finder, which is already helping thousands of people in Merton to try new activities, including the popular free swimming for under 16s and over 65s, and make Merton London’s Borough of Sport. Find your new sport or activity at getactive.io/area/merton

While you’re taking a breather from all that exercise, listen out for the Mini Musicians project – a council funded partnership with Merton Music Foundation and Roehampton University – that is pioneering new ways to teach Reception and Year One pupils to play instruments and gain new skills.

Whilst the council begins work on new initiatives to build a better Merton, a focus remains on providing practical help to those struggling with the cost of living crisis. The council is expanding our support for local people with housing and food costs, supporting businesses to become London Living Wage employers, getting more young people into the habit of saving, and supporting our voluntary and community sector.

Because of the current economic climate and the level of funding from central Government, the council has had to increase council tax by 4.99% in 2024/25. However, the council’s prudent financial management has enabled us to invest in what matters to Merton’s residents. This has been achieved despite the difficult financial environment local authorities are working in, with rising costs and an increase in demand for essential council services.

In the centre of this magazine, you will find your guide to council services which you can pull out and keep.

The council’s careful financial management has also enabled it to expand its Council Tax Support Scheme, which is already one of the most generous in the country. This will benefit more than 10,000 households, with 7,000 of these having not to pay any council tax at all.

To keep up to date with all your council news, please sign up to receive the weekly In Merton e-newsletter at merton.gov.uk/newsletter

Councillor Ross Garrod
Leader, London Borough of Merton

Councillor Ross Garrod
Leader, London Borough of Merton
Make your next move at our jobs fair

Employers from across the borough will be looking to hire people at our next jobs fair.

The event, which will be held at Wimbledon Library on Thursday 25 April, will include workshops on interview skills and tips on writing your CV, plus a free creche.

There will also be talks by industry experts and the chance to speak to employers from the private sector and public services.

This year’s first job fair, held in Morden Library in January, resulted in 50 job offers being made.

The Wimbledon event is free, but numbers are limited – as are places for talks and workshops – so booking tickets in advance is essential. Find out more and book merton.gov.uk/jobfair

Council signs up to anti-racism charter

The council has signed up to UNISON’S Anti-Racism Charter, which is dedicated to actively addressing and tackling racism in all its forms and dismantling barriers caused by racism in our borough.

As an organisation and employer, the council and its partners have a vital role to play in eliminating racism in our workforce and the communities we serve.

Our signature on this charter reaffirms our commitment to fostering belonging, reducing inequality, and promoting inclusivity in the council’s workforce. We are dedicated to being proactively anti-racist, not just non-racist.

Introducing Merton’s new brand

This new look aims to raise the profile of the council and put Merton on the map as a fantastic place to live and work.

The most visible part of this change is the council’s new logo, which you will see appearing on letters, bills and other communications.

The new brand has been designed at minimal cost, replacing a pre-digital visual identity, which dates back three decades. It is being gradually phased in, as assets including signage and vehicles come up for replacement.

Find out more at: merton.gov.uk/new-look
Secondary school places

Families of pupils starting secondary school in September have found out where their children have been offered a place.

Merton’s secondary schools, which have all been rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted, rank second in the country for the progress pupils make from finishing primary school to Year 11, based on last year’s exam results.

National Offer Day data from 1 March shows that 90% of Merton children have secured a spot in one of their top three preferred secondary schools, with 67% receiving an offer from their top choice.

Every Merton family who applied for a school place has received an offer and 70% of these were from the borough’s schools.

Measles cases highlight need for MMR jabs

Parents are being urged to have their children immunised against measles after some cases were diagnosed in Merton. The virus is highly contagious, and most infections have been in children and young people, which is why getting both the first and top-up vaccines of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) jab is so important.

Children normally receive their first MMR jab at two years old. They then should get two boosters at five years old. If you’re unsure how up-to-date you or your children are, ask your GP. You can get your first or booster vaccinations at any age, by contacting your GP. Find out more at merton.gov.uk/mmr

Pledge will support young people in care

A pledge has been made by the council to support care-experienced young people when they need to move home.

The council has signed the National Youth Advocacy Service’s My Things Matter pledge, which is a promise to treat children’s personal belongings with care on moving day.

The campaign highlights the challenges experienced by young people in care, who tend to move frequently, often at short notice, and without the chance to say goodbye to friends, teachers, or classmates.
Energy-efficient homes

This month, the council is launching a new fund to help homeowners make their homes warmer, cheaper and greener.

Working with our social enterprise loan partner, Lendology CIC, we will be offering low-interest rate loans of up to £20,000. The Home Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme will enable eligible homeowners in Merton to pay for energy efficiency works, such as insulation, replacement of windows, air or ground source heat pumps, or renewable energy installations, for example, solar panels and battery storage, to help reduce their energy bills and their carbon footprint.

Follow us on social media to hear more about the launch.

Community tree planting

More than 2,000 native woodland trees were planted in Morden Park during the first community planting day of the year.

The event, in February, which was organised by the council in partnership with charity Trees for Cities, attracted more than 165 volunteers, including members from the Ahmadiyya Community and the Ahmadiyya Women’s Association.

As well as enhancing the biodiversity, the planting of these trees will also reduce air and noise pollution along the nearby A24 road.

Merton Best Business Awards

The council is proud to be the headline sponsor of the 2024 Merton Best Business Awards, which are organised by Merton Chamber of Commerce. The awards recognise and celebrate innovation, excellence and best practice, from promising start-ups to larger companies.

The awards are due to be officially launched later in March, when this year’s categories will be unveiled.
Construction of much-needed new affordable homes in one of the borough’s most tired estates has begun as part of the largest regeneration project in Merton’s history.

A groundbreaking event was held on Mitcham’s Eastfields estate in January, where, together with High Path estate in South Wimbledon and Ravensbury estate in Morden, a total of more than 3,000 modern, energy efficient new homes will be built in phases over the next decade.

Properties are being rebuilt for existing tenants and homeowners – some of whom are living in homes in urgent need of redevelopment. Homes are also being built for new residents to move into to help meet the increasing demand for housing in the borough.

Clarion, the social landlord responsible for the estates, is investing £1.3bn in the regeneration, which will include new playgrounds, cycle parking, electrical vehicle charging points and landscaping. The council agreed a package of support worth millions to ensure that these new homes and infrastructure are built.
Kids and people aged over 65 have been making a splash in leisure centres with free swimming in the council’s Borough of Sport.

All three leisure centres, in Morden, Wimbledon and the Canons in Mitcham, offer timetables of specific sessions each week when kids aged 16 and under and people aged 65 and over can swim for free.

The council has made the sessions free to remove the barrier of having to pay for swimming during the cost of living crisis.

This means that the youngest and oldest residents can all enjoy the health benefits that swimming offers, including a full body workout, improved cardiovascular health and stronger muscles, while having a great time with family and friends.

The free swimming is for all abilities, from complete beginners, who are dipping their toes in for the first time, to swimmers who want to jump back into the water after some time away or those who want to gradually increase the number of laps of the pool that they can complete.

Dive into some free swimming

The stories of three black people learning to swim was made into a documentary by local filmmaker Olivia Smart, backed by the Netflix Documentary Talent Fund.

The council’s Cabinet Member for Sport, Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, attended the premiere of Black Stroke, which highlights some of the barriers facing black people who are learning to swim – and the ways they can now be overcome.

Black Stroke film airs on Netflix

Jane Asher, is a 92-year-old Merton resident and British Masters swimmer, who still competes around the world.

Jane said: “I like to extol the virtues of the sport of swimming for people of every age. In Merton, we have wonderful public leisure centres where you can learn to swim before you can walk, and you can keep swimming when you can’t walk any more! Swimming and racing make me look to the future. I have to aim for something. Everybody can benefit, no matter what age you are. So, take advantage of our facilities, and enjoy!”

Life is going swimmingly

Find out more at: merton.gov.uk/swimming

Watch the film youtube.com/watch?v=9pY6ALjX1c
For anyone already missing the Six Nations tournament
Rugby fitness sessions – Morden
Want to get fit enough to play an 80-minute rugby match, but not quite ready to join a team yet? Weekly fitness, skills and drills training on Morden Rec with Merton Rugby Club on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.

How to find it:
SEARCH: ‘Rugby’ on the activity finder at getactive.io/area/merton

For anyone who wants to get moving
Merton libraries classes with Nuffield Health – Pilates, yoga and body conditioning
Library card holders can do more than borrow books in Merton, with membership giving you access to a range of health and fitness classes too. Many classes are tailored to those who are less mobile, or people recovering from injury, and they happen at your local library every week.

How to find it:
activities listed on the activity finder at getactive.io/area/merton or head into your library for more information.

For your budding Karate Kids
Lil’Dragons Martial Arts – Wimbledon
Lil’Dragons is a specialist martial arts class for children aged 4–7.
With a focus on coordination, confidence, cooperation and fun – this class will be a hit with the little ones. First trial class is free.

How to find it:
SEARCH: ‘Karate’ on the activity finder at getactive.io/area/merton

For those starting or restarting their fitness journey
Our Parks – Mitcham Fair Green
Our Parks is all about getting people active outdoors, for free! Head down to Mitcham Fair Green for Boxfit (Tuesdays 9.30am) or Beginners’ Bootcamp (Saturdays at 10am) for an energetic workout suitable for all levels.

How to find it:
SEARCH: ‘Boxing fitness’ on the activity finder at getactive.io/area/merton or simply turn up.

For goal shooters who want to take it slow
Walking Netball – Mitcham and Morden
Walking Netball is a one-of-a-kind programme delivered by England Netball that gives access to a whole world of connection, laughter and fun. It’s netball as you know it, but with the pace slowed and the rules slightly tweaked. Weekly sessions at Canons Leisure Centre in the winter, and Morden Rec in the warmer months. 16+ with no upper age limit.

How to find it:
SEARCH: ‘Walking Netball’ on the activity finder at getactive.io/area/merton or head down on Thursdays at noon.

Scan me to find dozens of new ways to workout added every week. Check back on our activity finder to see what’s on offer near you.
The fund is intended to help make Merton a place where people are proud to live, work and study. It is also for projects that will make our borough greener, help tackle climate change and build a sustainable future.

Among the 24 brilliant projects that successfully bid for funding, are:

- SHINE Saturday School in Mitcham, which supports 50 disadvantaged young people as they start secondary school, to provide 150 hours a year of extra study support.
- The much-loved children’s Polka Theatre, in Wimbledon, is receiving funding for improvements to older parts of the building and upgrades to electrical systems to boost its energy efficiency.
- The New Horizon Centre provides a wide range of services and activities for a local people and is at the heart of its community in Pollards Hill. The centre will use its funding to install equipment to create an audio-visual teaching space and business hub. It will also make improvements to a stage area used for classes and performances.

Disadvantaged young people; a local theatre and a greening volunteer group are just some of the beneficiaries of a £1m council fund.
Merton Garden Streets is a volunteer-led project that brings neighbours together to plant pollinator-friendly flowers on Merton streets, verges, and tree pits. Their funding will help improve the look and feel of neighbourhoods and increase plant biodiversity in the borough.

The funding is part of the council’s Civic Pride Fund, made up of our ‘Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund’ which is available for projects that support our communities, and the Community Climate Action Fund which is available for projects that help to reduce carbon emissions or adapt to climate change.

The council wants Merton to be a place where people are proud to live, work and study: where everyone can thrive, and where we embrace the strength and diversity of our communities.
A total number of 397 residents have been given a council grant to help them replace their vehicles that had become non-compliant within the London-wide Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

The council launched a £1m scrappage scheme six months ago, following the introduction of ULEZ to the borough last year.

A £1,000 grant per vehicle is available to help residents in the least affluent areas of the community and who are not well connected by public transport, providing that their car meets Transport for London’s scrappage criteria.

The grant is also available for all of Merton’s carers.

The grant is in addition to the £2,000 grant available from the Greater London Authority and aims to help people with the cost of living and improve the borough’s air quality.

Applications are on a first-come, first-served basis.

Check if your address and vehicle are eligible at merton.gov.uk/scrappage

Driving forward sustainable transport

More EV charging points

A further 520 new electric vehicle (EV) charging points have been installed onto lampposts across Merton.

This exceeds the council’s target for the end of 2023 – which was 500. And it brings the total number of charging points across the borough to 780. Another ten will be installed by the end of this year.

The EV rollout forms part of the council’s priorities to improve local air quality and make Merton a net zero borough by 2050.

Net zero means no longer adding to the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Not all emissions can be reduced to zero, so those that remain need to be matched by actively removing greenhouse gases.

The EVs are being supplied by a company called charge. This partnership makes EV ownership practical for residents, especially for those without off-street parking.

Scrapage scheme takes most polluting vehicles off the road

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Applications are on a first-come, first-served basis.
The council launches new business rates grant for living wage employers

The council is offering a Business Rates Grant Scheme to encourage Merton-based businesses to become living wage accredited employers.

Paying the London Living Wage has many proven benefits in addition to a decent, standard wage, including better staff satisfaction and retention, better quality of work, and lower absence.

This scheme is being paid for by the council’s Cost of Living Support Fund. Businesses are also being impacted by the cost of living, and this grant aims to help them and their staff at the same time.

An extra £1m is now available in the council’s Cost of Living Support Fund to provide more vital advice and assistance to people during the cost of living crisis – bringing the fund’s total to £3m.

Months of inflation, high interest rates, and continued high costs for housing, food, and energy are deeply impacting people across our community, particularly those on low incomes.

The additional money will provide food support and help reduce the risk of homelessness from missed rent and mortgage payments. It will continue to fund community organisations to support their important work for residents.

The funding will also go towards a scheme to help Merton businesses pay the London Living Wage and encourage young people to start saving early through the Merton Young Savers Accounts.

The funding is enabling lots of dedicated work to make a difference to residents who are struggling to make ends meet. So far:

2,700+ people attended the council’s Cost of Living Action events for face-to-face support

893 people engaged with Citizens Advice Merton and Lambeth’s Merton Cost of Living team in 12 months

85,470 kg of food was distributed by Merton’s Community Fridge Network over 12 months

The council’s Warm & Well partners (Age UK Merton, Thinking Works and Wimbledon Guild) did the following in the second quarter of 2023:

184 Fuel vouchers were distributed

169 Energy efficiency visits were made

33 Heating checks were made

21 Residents supported with installation of energy efficiency measures

Visit: merton.gov.uk/CostOfLiving

The council’s Holiday Activities and Food clubs have been extended to half-term holidays in the 2023–2024 academic year.

Merton’s Holiday Activities and Food clubs have been extended to half-term holidays in the 2023–2024 academic year.

Residents supported with installation of energy efficiency measures.
A balanced budget to invest in Merton

The council’s budget for 2024/25 will protect frontline services, invest in communities, ensure value for money, and continue to provide practical cost-of-living help for those in need.

Counsels across the country are under unprecedented financial pressure.

This year’s budget is set against a backdrop of increased costs, reduced revenue, and a sharp rise in demand for our services – which means that we are having to do more with less.

At the heart of the council’s budget is the principle that we need to deliver good local services whilst securing the best value for money for taxpayers.

To achieve this, the council is attracting new talent and implementing a commercial approach – ensuring fair and transparent procurement, helping our services to be efficient, and securing private investment into the borough.

The council is also upgrading its contracts to get value for local people who work for our suppliers. By ensuring that they’re paid the London’s Living Wage, the council is delivering services fairly for those that use them, those that provide them, and those that pay for them.

Getting the best value for people in Merton

Merton needs secure housing, cleaner air, and to tackle climate change for tomorrow’s residents, as well as today’s.

The council is building on this by increasing free and low-cost sporting opportunities, and working with local clubs to reach more people, young and old, of all abilities.

To get people active, the council is funding free swimming for under 16s and over 65s, upgrading our multi-use games areas, tennis courts, paddling pools, and other park facilities.

Becoming London’s Borough of Sport

Merton has a proud sporting heritage, whether it’s the oldest continuously used cricket ground, football’s greatest comeback story, or the world’s most famous tennis championship.

The council is building on this by increasing free and low-cost sporting opportunities, and working with local clubs to reach more people, young and old, of all abilities.

To show our commitment to becoming London’s Borough of Sport, the council is upgrading facilities and parks.

The council is greening Merton by planting thousands of new trees.

Funding sports activities

The council is funding low cost and free activities at sports clubs around the borough.

Upgrading facilities for all

The council is greening Merton by planting thousands of new trees.

Greening the borough

Getting the best value for people in Merton

At the heart of the council’s budget is the principle that we need to deliver good local services whilst securing the best value for money for taxpayers.

This is made more challenging by the reduction in real terms in Government funding – down by £17.1 million since 2010 and regretfully this has led the council to increase council tax by 4.99% in order not to impact on the services we all rely on. Merton council tax is still lower than neighbouring boroughs such as Sutton, Kingston and Croydon, however the council knows that any increase can be a struggle.

Building a sustainable future

The council is greening Merton by planting thousands of new trees.

The council is greening the borough by planting more trees and improving our much-loved parks.
A guide to key council services
2024–2025
A guide to key council services

Parking permits
Buy, renew or change a permit.

Planning
Find and view planning applications, apply for planning permission and get planning advice.

Libraries
Renew items, download free ebooks and magazines, search for new releases and join the library.

Schools
Apply for a school place.

Council tax
Pay your bill, check your account, tell us you've moved and apply for discounts or exemptions.

Waste
Book a bulky waste collection or report a missed collection.

For a full list of online services, go to merton.gov.uk/doitonline

Keeping in touch with the council
Subscribe to receive our email news. Be the first to hear about the latest news, events and services, plus emergency alerts and updates.

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@amerton_council
@londonbootofmerton
@youtube.com/mertoncouncil

London Borough of Merton
The borough's magazine In Merton is also available at merton.gov.uk/inmerton

Adoption (Adopt London)
adoptlondon.org.uk
adoptionALS@southwark.gov.uk
020 7525 1746

Adult learning
merton.gov.uk/adultlearning

Adult social care
merton.gov.uk/adult-social-care
020 8545 4388 (9.30am–1.30pm)

Benefits advice and local welfare
merton.gov.uk/benefitsadvice
welfarebenefitsteam@merton.gov.uk
lwss@merton.gov.uk
020 8274 4908 (11am–3pm)

Blue Badge parking permits
merton.gov.uk/bluebadge
concessionarytravel@merton.gov.uk
020 8274 4990 (11am–3pm)

Bulky waste collections
merton.gov.uk/bulky
020 8274 4902

Cemeteries
merton.gov.uk/cemeteries
020 3876 8806

Childcare and early years
merton.gov.uk/childcare
fsd@merton.gov.uk
020 8274 5300

Children's social care
merton.gov.uk/social-care
CandFhub@merton.gov.uk
020 8545 4226/7
Out of hours 020 8770 5000

Comments, compliments and complaints
merton.gov.uk/complaints
complaints@merton.gov.uk
020 8545 3060 (10am–2pm)

Committees and meetings
merton.gov.uk/committee
democraticservices@merton.gov.uk
020 8545 3616

Conservation areas
merton.gov.uk/conservation_areas
conservation.areas@merton.gov.uk
020 8545 3041

Council tax
merton.gov.uk/counciltax
local.taxation@merton.gov.uk
020 8274 4904 (10.30am–5pm)

Council tax support and housing benefit
merton.gov.uk/cts
housing.benefits@merton.gov.uk
020 8274 4903 (9am–1pm)

Councillors
merton.gov.uk/councillors
Conservative 020 8545 3396
Labour 020 8545 3424
Liberal Democrats 020 8545 4770
(Tuesday–Thursday 8.30am–2.30pm)
Merton Park Ward Independent
Residents 020 8545 4026

Education welfare services
merton.gov.uk/educationwelfare
020 8545 4021

Electoral services
merton.gov.uk/voting
020 8545 3407

Emergency information
Information about emergencies and emergency plans affecting Merton residents or businesses.
merton.gov.uk/emergency
civilcontingencies@merton.gov.uk
020 8274 4901 or 020 8545 3476

Events
Find out about council events or, if you are running a community event, you can advertise it for free on our online events calendar.
merton.gov.uk/events
events@merton.gov.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family Services Directory</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/fsd</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fostering</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/fostering</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fostering@merton.gov.uk">fostering@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>0800 073 0874</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fly-tipping</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/flytipping</td>
<td></td>
<td>020 8274 4902</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Freedom of Information</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/foi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:foi@merton.gov.uk">foi@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8545 4634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freedom Passes for disabled people</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/freedompasses</td>
<td><a href="mailto:concessionarytravel@merton.gov.uk">concessionarytravel@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8274 4990 (11am–3pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freedom Passes for older people</strong></td>
<td>londoncouncils.gov.uk/freedom-pass</td>
<td></td>
<td>0300 330 1433 (Monday to Sunday 8am–8pm). Calls charged at local rate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Garden waste collection service</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste</td>
<td></td>
<td>020 8274 4902</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graffiti removal</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/ graffiti</td>
<td></td>
<td>020 8274 4902</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Homelessness</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/homelessness</td>
<td><a href="mailto:housingadvice@merton.gov.uk">housingadvice@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8545 3636</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Out of hours 020 8770 5000 (5.30pm–9am)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing benefit</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/housingbenefit</td>
<td><a href="mailto:housing.benefits@merton.gov.uk">housing.benefits@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8274 4903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing register</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/allocations</td>
<td><a href="mailto:registration@merton.gov.uk">registration@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8545 3305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leisure</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/leisure</td>
<td><a href="mailto:leisure@merton.gov.uk">leisure@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Libraries</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:library.enquiries@merton.gov.uk">library.enquiries@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>0333 370 4700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Licensing</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:licensing@merton.gov.uk">licensing@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>020 8545 3969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Litter bins</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/litter-bins</td>
<td></td>
<td>020 8274 4902</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Local land charges searches</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/landcharges</td>
<td><a href="mailto:locallandcharges@merton.gov.uk">locallandcharges@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8545 3350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local Studies and Heritage Centre</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/localstudies</td>
<td><a href="mailto:local.studies@merton.gov.uk">local.studies@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8545 3239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morden Library, Merton Civic Centre</td>
<td>London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MASCOT Telecare</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/mascot</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mascot@merton.gov.uk">mascot@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8274 5940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noise nuisance</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/noise</td>
<td><a href="mailto:noiseandnuisance@merton.gov.uk">noiseandnuisance@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8545 3025 (9am–5pm)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Out of hours 020 8543 9750 (Friday and Saturday 11pm–4am)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupational therapy</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/occupationaltherapy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ssotduty@merton.gov.uk">ssotduty@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td><strong>Parking</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/parking</td>
<td><a href="mailto:parking@merton.gov.uk">parking@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8545 4661 (11am–4pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/planning</td>
<td><a href="mailto:planning@merton.gov.uk">planning@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td><strong>Pot holes</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/parks</td>
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<td><strong>Public health</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/publichealth</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Register office</strong></td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/register</td>
<td><a href="mailto:register.office@merton.gov.uk">register.office@merton.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>020 8274 5777</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Morden Park House, Morden Park London Road, Morden SM4 5QU</strong></td>
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## Snow clearance
We take action, as far as reasonably practicable, to allow the safe movement of all highway users on important routes in the borough, and keep delays to a minimum. This work includes gritting and salting roads, to reduce the risk of ice forming, as well as clearing roads and pavements of accumulated ice and snow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snow clearance</td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/wintermaintenance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Street cleaning
Street cleaning is essential to keep our streets and pavements clean and safe. We work to ensure that our streets and pavements are clean and well-maintained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street cleaning</td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/street-care-cleaning</td>
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</table>

## Street lighting
Street lighting is important for safety and security, and we work to ensure that our streets are well-lit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street lighting</td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/streetlighting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Trading standards
Trading standards is responsible for ensuring that businesses in the borough are complying with the law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trading standards</td>
<td>merton.gov.uk/tradingstandards</td>
</tr>
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</table>

## Tree preservation
A tree preservation order is an order made by the council intended to protect one or more trees or areas of woodland if its removal would have a significant impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>merton.gov.uk/tpo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in this brochure is correct at the time of printing, but may change.

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## Want to get online but need help?

Residents aged 18 or over can visit Merton Libraries and borrow a laptop or tablet, or bring your own device along and access our free WiFi. Library staff and volunteers are helping residents to keep in contact with their community through Connecting Merton, an IT-equipment-loaning scheme.

The libraries also offer one-to-one IT support, plus a range of IT courses for beginners right the way through to the more advanced. To access these services, you need to be a library member. Registering is quick and free.

**Pop in to any of our seven branches, call 0333 370 4700 or visit merton.gov.uk/libraries**

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## A guide to key council services

**Roads and highways**
- merton.gov.uk/roads-highways-pavements
- trafficandhighways@merton.gov.uk
- 020 8545 3700 (10am–4pm)

**Rubbish and recycling**
- merton.gov.uk/recycling
- 020 8274 4902

**Schools admissions**
- merton.gov.uk/schools
- 020 8274 4906

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The council is expanding its Council Tax Support scheme, which is already one of the most generous in the country. The scheme will reduce bills for around 10,000 Merton households, with approximately 7,000 households not having to pay anything.

For more information on the support available, visit [merton.gov.uk/CostOfLiving](http://merton.gov.uk/CostOfLiving) or call 020 8066 4086.
The Electoral Commission

You need photo ID to vote at a polling station

No ID? You can apply for free voter ID

Find out more at electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID

or call 0800 328 0280
Get ready to vote

Your guide on how to vote in this year’s elections

On Thursday 2 May, Merton voters will go to the polls to elect the Mayor of London and members of the London Assembly. This will be the seventh time that Londoners have elected a Mayor and Assembly, after the current system was introduced in 2000, but this time there will be some significant changes to how you vote.

Voter ID
If you vote in person at the polling station, you’ll now need to show photo ID before you’re given a ballot paper. Here are some of the acceptable forms that you can use. It can even be expired, so long as you’re still recognisable from the photo.

1. Passport
2. Driving licence (includes provisional licences)
3. ID card bearing a PASS hologram
4. National Identity Card issued by the EU, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein
5. Biometric Residence Permit
6. Ministry of Defence Form 90
7. A Blue Badge
8. An Older Person’s Bus Pass
9. A Disabled Person’s Bus Pass
10. An Oyster 60+ Card
11. A Freedom Pass

If you do not have an accepted form of ID, you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate from the council. Find out more: Visit merton.gov.uk/VoterID or ask the staff at your local library.

Postal votes
If you have a postal vote or intend to apply for one, there are some key changes that you need to be aware of:

- You can now apply for a postal vote online at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote
- You need to provide your National Insurance number, as well as a date of birth and signature when applying.

- The period before you have to renew your postal vote application is now three years.
- If you choose to hand in your postal vote at Merton Civic Centre or a polling station, you will need to fill in a form providing personal details, otherwise the postal vote will be rejected.
- The number of postal votes that you can hand in has been limited to five, plus your own.

Electoral system

Mayoral
The system used to count the votes for the mayoral election has changed, from the supplementary vote, when you could pick a first choice and a second choice, to first past the post, which allows one choice only.

London Assembly
For the London Assembly election, you will get two ballot papers – one to elect an Assembly Member for our constituency of Merton and Wandsworth, and another to elect 11 Assembly Members to represent the whole of London. The constituency vote will be counted under first past the post, with the candidate winning the most votes elected. The London-wide vote will be counted under a form of proportional representation. This means that you will get to vote for one party or group of independents, and the eleven seats will be divided up proportionally amongst the parties/independents that receive at least 5% of the vote.

Are you registered to vote?
Make sure you don’t lose your vote by checking that you are registered to vote at your current address. To vote on 2 May, you need to register before 16 April. merton.gov.uk/voting

If you vote in person at the polling station, you’ll now need to show photo ID before you’re given a ballot paper.

Find out more at: merton.gov.uk/VoterID or ask staff at your local library.

Dogs at polling stations has become a popular part of voting.
Courses for Work, Life and Wellbeing

MERTON ADULT EDUCATION
Learn something new with one of our exciting Adult Education courses, that fit around your lifestyle and working day:

- Art & Craft
- Baking & Cake Decorating
- British Sign Language
- Business
- Childcare and Teaching Assistant
- Computing & IT
- English, ESOL & Maths
- Essential Digital Skills
- Fashion
- Floristry
- Graphic Design
- Health & Social Care
- Languages
- Leisure & Wellbeing
- Music
- Musical Instrument Making & Repair
- Photography
- Pilates
- Singing
- Teaching & Training
- Training for Work

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 and to enrol online please visit stcg.ac.uk/adult-education

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.

- 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
- Climate Change and Environmental Awareness
- Data Protection and Cyber Security

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 elaine.morgan@stcg.ac.uk

OUTDOOR SOUL STAGE:
The Real Thing
Odyssey
Loose Ends
Pauline Henry
The Voice of the Chimes
Alison Limerick
MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED!

USE DISCOUNT CODE MERTON for 10% OFF
WWW.SOULTASIA.COM

BIG TOP STAGE: RNB NATION
90's & 00's R&B CLASSICS
Mini Musicians hit the right note

Hundreds of primary school children in Merton will be taught to play a melodica from scratch in a pioneering pilot programme.

The council, in partnership with Merton Music Foundation, has invested £250,000 into Mini Musicians, which aims to use the joy of making music to improve children’s social development, following the isolation of the pandemic.

More than 650 pupils in ten primary schools across the borough started lessons in January, as part of the programme, which will run until July 2025.

The classes begin with a focus on general musicianship, incorporating singing and body percussion, followed by the introduction of various instruments, including chime bars, claves, and glockenspiels.

Year 1 students will eventually move on to learning the melodica, which will teach them breathing techniques and keyboard skills.

The first cohort of Year 1 pupils will also work towards Awards and Certificates in Musical Development, a nationally recognised qualification from Trinity College London. Their progress will be followed by a study by academics at the University of Roehampton, who will evaluate the broader impact on both children’s social development and academic attainment.

The younger children in the cohort of four to seven-year-olds were born during the pandemic. Being isolated from other children during the COVID-19 lockdowns and national restrictions has had an impact on the language development of some children.

Inclusive lesson plans and interactive resources for all abilities have been developed by Merton Music Foundation, using songs and resources from Sing Up, ensuring that every child, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, can take part and succeed.

A comprehensive training programme for educators runs parallel to the initiative, ensuring that teachers can help pupils get the most out of playing music. A resource bank of songs and lesson plans will be created as part of the pilot project.
Spring walks along the Wandle Trail

If you feel like getting out for a walk, Merton’s stretch of the Wandle Trail, between Plough Lane and Mitcham, is a perfect place to enjoy some fresh air and discover the vibrant wildlife that thrives along its path.

Since last spring, the council’s green spaces team has been making improvements along the path, including pruning overgrown trees and branches to make night-time joggers and cyclists feel safer, by giving them a clear line of sight between lampposts. The cuttings and logs have been used to create wildlife habitats for hazel dormice, bats, birds, frogs, butterflies and moths.

The council has also planted 63 trees along the path, including rowan, cedar, hazel, and alder, plus two large Scots pines and a large birch on either side of the entrances via Plough Lane.

The range of species promises a green canopy and a stunning walk. If you look extra closely, you’ll also see owl and bird boxes along the trail, which were repurposed from old furniture by a community charity, costing less than commercial bird boxes and lasting longer.

More boxes will be installed this month by local volunteer groups. Drilled holes have also been created at the end of logs for solitary bees who will lay eggs and stuff leaves in them, contributing to a flourishing ecosystem.

Also consider taking a detour along the Daffodil Walk – a riverside path connected to the trail, in Colliers Wood – which is filled with the bright, yellow flowers at this time of year. It is a place to remember those lost to suicide, inspired by Jane Upson, in memory of her nephew.

A beach-themed paddling pool and a giant slide will be ready for kids to enjoy during their summer holidays.

The council has also prioritised playgrounds in Haydons Road Recreation Ground, in Wimbledon, and Cottenham Park, in Raynes Park, for renovation this spring.

Playground renovations before summer sun

They will be the first attractions to be completed as part of a £1.75m five-year programme to revitalise playgrounds and paddling pools most in need across the borough.

The playgrounds in Haydons Road Recreation Ground, in Wimbledon, and Cottenham Park, in Raynes Park, will also be prioritised for renovation this spring.

Thank you to all the residents who gave their feedback. The council will soon be hosting more community events on how further popular parks can be improved.

Residents can enjoy the new facilities in time for summer, including the newly-upgraded paddling pool at Joseph Hood Recreation Ground in Morden.

Enjoy the great outdoors

Find out more merton.gov.uk/wandletrail

Rowan Road Recreation Ground (see artist’s impression, above) and Miles Road Recreation Ground, both in Mitcham, are set for playground upgrades, following feedback from residents at community events.

Find out more: merton.gov.uk/parksupgrades

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Mitcham Carnival is set to return this year, following its successful revival last summer.

Come along on Sunday 23 June for an extravaganza of colour, costumes, dance and music, and celebrate the rich diversity and vibrant communities in our borough.

More than 5,000 people joined the celebrations in 2023, and this year’s event promises to be even bigger and better.

Residents are invited to enjoy a day full of free entertainment for all the family, including a mix of performers, various activities and music.

In between the entertainment, enjoy delicious cuisine inspired by recipes from different cultures and explore various stalls run by vendors, community groups and council services.

The council will be announcing the acts as the event draws closer, so for the latest news, sign up to receive our weekly What’s On e-newsletter and keep an eye on our social media channels.

Sign up to the What’s On e-newsletter at: merton.gov.uk/newsletter

Find out more: merton.gov.uk/mitchamcarnival

Photos from last year’s Mitcham Carnival at Three Kings Piece

Save the date for this year’s Mitcham Carnival: Sunday 23 June!
Congrats Merton!

Merton residents collectively prevented 5.7 tonnes of CO2 emissions from Oct to Dec 2023 by renting instead of buying!

Equivalent to driving an average petrol car from London to Oxford 350 times

What useful items will you rent?
Cleaning • DIY • Gardening • Hosting • Hobbying & more!

Book online and collect from Morden Library inside Merton Civic Centre

libraryofthings.co.uk

Great for spring!

Use code INMERTON50 for 50% off your next hire
Expires 31/03/24

LIBRARY OF THINGS
Your sustainable guide to spring cleaning

Whether you’re refreshing your living space or preparing for a move, it’s crucial to approach spring cleaning and decluttering with an eco-friendly mindset. Residents have lots of options to reuse, reduce, and responsibly remove items, contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable community.

Recycle

**Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre:**

At the Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre in Morden, you can recycle a wide range of items, from old washing machines to books. You need to book your visit, which can be done online at merton.gov.uk/garthroad, where you can also find a full list of accepted items, or by calling 020 8274 4902.

**Bulky waste collection:**

Schedule a bulky waste collection for larger items, such as furniture, old carpets, or electrical appliances. Collections are available on weekdays (excluding public holidays), making it easy to responsibly dispose of your bulky belongings.

**Retailer take-back programmes:**

Some retailers will buy back old furniture or take it away for free to be recycled when delivering your new item.

**Donation and Selling:**

Support local charities by donating items to charity shops or sell them online using platforms like Gumtree, eBay, Freecycle, or Facebook Marketplace, where your unwanted items can find new homes.

Reuse

**The Wheel Merton:**

Fix your broken items at a repair café or transform your old textiles while learning new sewing skills in the Preloved Studio at Canons House in Mitcham. [www.thewheelmerton.org](http://www.thewheelmerton.org)

**Upcycle furniture:**

Give an old piece of furniture a new look by upcycling it to add a personalised touch to your home. You can find tutorials online.

**Dons Local Action Group:**

Making space for your new fridge? Donate working white goods to the Dons Local Action Group. Their dedicated volunteers can even arrange to pick up the items from your doorstep, ensuring that your unwanted appliances find a new home with those who need them most.

**Repair directory:**

Check out the listings in the Restart Project’s Repair directory, to see if your item can be mended. [therestartproject.org](http://therestartproject.org)

Or online resources can also guide you through DIY repairs.
Can you spare a room for 3-4 nights per week? Host families required for secondary school foreign students and their teachers between 13-18 years old on a School trip, staying 3-4 nights per week. You need to speak English, be friendly and caring, provide an evening meal, breakfast and a packed lunch. In Twin, Triple or Quad room. Students meet at 8am and return at 7pm and are out all day. You can earn £360 per week (depending on number of students/night). Join our friendly team of Host families who are fully supported 24 hours a day. Call Antoinette on 07939 182270

More information is available on the project page at sgn.co.uk - under Major Planned Projects

Stay At Home

HOST FAMILIES NEEDED

If you would like to earn an extra income to help with the cost of living crisis, we have weekly groups visiting in 2024.

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 that 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

More information is available on the project page at sgn.co.uk - under Major Planned Projects

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Could you become a foster carer?

Davinia Headman had been a probation officer for five years and also worked with children in nurseries and schools, before she began to consider becoming a foster carer.

Davinia said: “I saw a sign advertising fostering in Merton and suddenly everything just clicked. I called the fostering team who were so welcoming and helpful and, as soon as I’d been to the first meeting, I knew I wanted to change career.”

Davinia, a single parent, was a bit nervous about how she’d cope and what other people might think, but she took the plunge and is now caring for a young boy.

She’s extremely grateful that the training is ongoing because it has helped prepare her for every situation.

She said: “You really need to have a patient heart and want to work with children to help them become the best version of themselves. It’s vital to think carefully about the placements you’re offered, rather than saying yes to the first child.

“Taking your time allows you to consider all the logistics, including things like the school run and managing their needs.

“It’s also so important to keep in touch with your supervisor whenever you need extra support because there are always going to be challenges.

“As your relationship with the child develops, it’s extremely rewarding to watch them grow physically and emotionally.”

Fostering: meeting the requirements

If you’re over the age of 21, can legally work in the UK, have a spare bedroom and can demonstrate that you can keep children safe and provide them with a stable home life, then you’ve met the main requirements for becoming a foster parent.

Merton Council supports its foster carers using the Mockingbird Family Model, which is based on the idea of having an extended family. You will receive ongoing training and a generous fostering allowance. This covers the child’s clothing, food, travel, pocket money and any special equipment they may need.
Heather Sanders from Motspur Park is one inspiring lady, having just been awarded the Second World War Medal – at the age of 99 years young – for her service in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) between 1943 and 1947.

At the outbreak of World War II, Portland in Dorset was a natural target for German aircraft, due to the importance of the Portland Island Naval Base. In response, a number of heavy anti-aircraft batteries were built on the island, in particular the Verne Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery.

This was controlled and guided by a Gun Operations Room located at Nottington House, near Weymouth. As the war progressed, the battery was updated with electronic predictors and radar control, which required skilled operators and trackers – of whom Heather was one.

Through headsets and mouthpieces, the movements of incoming aircraft were fed to the Verne Anti-Aircraft Batteries to target the approaching fighters.

“We felt safe as the operations room was underground,” Heather said. “I never felt frightened. I have no unhappy memories doing this job, as I felt we were doing a good job for the benefit the country.”

Heather continued her work there until June 1944 and the approach of Operation Overlord, which was launched on D-Day.

Following the Normandy landings, she then volunteered to be posted to the town of Bad Oeynhausen in Westphalia Northern Rhine, where she helped Allied soldiers and their families settle into their billets.

The 21st Army Group was dissolved and became the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), headquartered in the town. Heather remained there for two years before being demobilised, returning to England.

There is no doubt that women in the ATS broke boundaries. Their pioneering work was taken up in the post-war era by the Women’s Royal Army Corps – and today, women hold fully active military roles alongside men.

Heather has lived in Merton for more than seven decades, and is a mother of two, a grandmother of five, and a great-grandmother to three.

Congratulations, Heather – and thank you, for everything.
People who do not feel confident using technology or are unsure about going online can get help to develop their digital skills in Merton libraries, thanks to a new project.

Residents will be able to take part in free IT courses and will be given one-to-one support by volunteers. This includes learning computer skills and using social media, as well as practical help, including how to order shopping online.

The project, called Connecting Merton, also allows people to borrow laptops, tablets and smart devices, such as the Amazon Echo, from Merton libraries for a period of three months.

The project is a partnership between the council and Wimbledon Guild.

To qualify for the project, you have to be over 18 years old and be a Merton resident. You can enquire about it at any of the borough’s seven libraries.
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