

iN MERTON



INSIDE

**Hurdling
towards
becoming
London's
Borough of
Sport**

ISSUE 03 • September 2024
News and information from your council

 **LONDON BOROUGH OF
MERTON**

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IN MERTON

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A new season of sport

As the summer months draw to a close and schools have started back, I want to congratulate all of the Merton pupils who got their exam results last month. They should be so proud of all their hard work, and I wish them all the best as they embark on the next step in their lives.

I also want to say a big thank you to all the teaching staff across the borough who work tirelessly to give young people in Merton the best start in life. Through their efforts, 95% of our schools are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted, and consistently perform above the national average in exam results – find out more about Merton’s fantastic schools on page 10.


Alongside the excitement of the Euros and the Paris Olympics, we’ve been having our very own Summer of Sport here in Merton with hundreds of activities on offer across the borough – including for our youngest residents with our newly refurbished playgrounds and paddling pools and splashpads.

We rounded off the Summer of Sport with the return of our Big Sports Day – this time in Wimbledon Park, where nearly 7,000 residents got to try around 70 different sports and activities put on by 45 organisations – all for free! But the fun doesn’t stop when the sun does – especially with the £100,000 of Borough of Sport funding we have awarded to more than 20 local sporting and community organisations to ensure everyone, no matter their background, ability, or stage in life, can access sport or activity opportunities that suit them.

As well as getting out and trying new sports, we want everyone in Merton to be able to get the most out of where they live and feel proud of their neighbourhood. As part of our work in this area, we are continuing our Civic Pride Fund which helped 25 exciting projects last year – from making improvements to shopfronts in Pollards Hill and Haydons Road, to creating a new community green space with rain gardens and sustainable drainage at Kenilworth Green.

We also want everyone to feel secure in their neighbourhood and keep Merton as one of the safest boroughs in London. That’s why we are piloting a new Safer Streets Enforcement Patrol – led by our Safer Merton team – to identify and tackle anti-social behaviour and fly tipping, and hear from residents about how we can help them feel safer. If you need to report anything, you’ll find a guide at the end of this magazine on how to contact key council services.

Finally, we want to hear from you about how the council spends our budget. With the economic problems inherited by the new Government, funding remains very tight and we remain committed to delivering good services and value for money. Find out how you can have your say on page 27.



Councillor Ross Garrod
Leader, London Borough of Merton



© Matt Grayson

Councillor Ross Garrod
Leader, London Borough of Merton

New zebra crossing

Plans have been drawn up, at the request of residents, to install a zebra crossing on a busy road in Morden.

The idea was put forward during a recent residents' coffee morning, attended by Council Leader, Councillor Ross Garrod, who asked the council's Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Stephen Alambritis, to look into how to improve safety on Martin Way, near the junction with Mostyn Road.

Following surveys of vehicles and pedestrians, a proposal has been put forward for the new crossing outside South Merton railway station. There is currently an island crossing on the site, which is heavily used by pedestrians, including bus passengers, train commuters and pupils on their way to and from schools in Merton Park.



(L-R) Councillor Ross Garrod and Councillor Stephen Alambritis

Detailed designs for the zebra crossing are currently being drawn up and will be subject to an independent safety audit, after which a 21-day statutory consultation will be undertaken in the autumn.

Cleaning up gum

Jet washers will be used to remove chewing gum from the pavements surrounding three busy Underground stations.



Merton Council has secured a £26,438 grant from the Chewing Gum Task Force, set up by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and overseen by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, to tackle chewing gum litter in the areas surrounding Wimbledon, Morden and Colliers Wood stations. The task force, funded by gum manufacturers, aims to clean up our streets and deter people from dropping gum on the ground. The funding is supporting the council's aim to revitalise our high streets for everyone to enjoy.



New lifts at rail station

Lifts are set to be installed at Motspur Park station after the council called for step-free access at railway stations across the borough.

Following a two-week testing period, the lifts are expected to become fully operational in November. This is set to make journeys easier for wheelchair users, people with limited mobility, parents with pushchairs and travellers carrying luggage.

Merton seizes homes from rogue landlord

A rogue landlord who persistently failed to license several rented properties has had the homes seized by Merton Council in one of the first actions of its kind in the country.

The council has used special powers as part of a new scheme to take temporary control of the homes and direct the tenants' rental income into ensuring the management of the property is to the standard we expect for tenants. The owner

remains responsible for paying the mortgages. All private rented homes in Figge's Marsh, Graveney, Longthornton and Pollards Hill wards must now be licensed under the council's groundbreaking Selective Licensing Scheme, introduced by the council last year. This gives the council powers to tackle poor property conditions and antisocial behaviour in these areas, and it follows consultation with residents.

Council homes approved

The first council homes to be built in a generation have been given planning approval.

This decision is the final stage in developing plans for 93 new homes at Elm Nursery car park, Mitcham; Raleigh Gardens car park, Mitcham; land at Canons, Madeira Road, Mitcham; and Farm Road Church, Morden.

The council's Development and Planning Applications Committee unanimously passed amendments to the original planning applications at four sites across Mitcham and Morden, bringing them up to the most current building regulations and standards and designating all the homes for social rent. This is the first phase of the council's plans to build 400 new homes across the borough –



An artist's impression of Canon's Place courtyard

all for social rent – which will meet some of the highest standards of green design and energy efficiency, known as Passivhaus. These developments are supported with a multi-million pound investment from the Mayor of London's Affordable Homes programme 2021–2026.

Are you registered to vote?

Residents are being asked to make sure their voter registration details are up to date, particularly if they have recently moved home, either into Merton or to a different address in the borough. The council has already contacted everyone by email or post and will be sending reminders to anyone who has not yet responded, followed up by home visits, if necessary. Find out more merton.gov.uk/voting



Merton's Big Sports Day

Merton's biggest community sports event returned for its second year, with nearly 7,000 residents of all ages attending the event in Wimbledon Park this September.

Big Sports Day, which this year boasted over 70 free activities, is part of our mission to become London's first-ever Borough of Sport, and ensure that all residents, no matter their background or ability, can access an activity or sport that works for them.

From grassroots coaching right through to high profile organisations like AFC Wimbledon Football Club and the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), the event also helps the best of Merton's sporting sector collectively show their support for our Borough of Sport ambitions.

Courts and pitches saw tennis skills classes and beach volleyball taster sessions. Mini golf and

disc golf was open for all, while the big green space hosted large-scale activities including a zip wire and bungee trampolining.

Inside the various marquees across the park, services and specialist providers delivered activities to cater for a range of accessibility needs, and hosted expert talks from authors, athletes and community figures alike. Among the sports stars that attended was Aggie Beever-Jones, England international football player and forward for Chelsea Women's team, who grew up right here in Merton.

Here are some of the highlights from our second Big Sports Day.





Every day is a sports day: scan to find a class, club or activity near you on our Activity Finder, which has hundreds of activities to choose from across Merton, with many free and low cost options available.



Thank you to Veriforce CHAS, Better Leisure, Clarion Housing Group, Cappagh, FM Conway, AELTC and Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK for their sponsorship of the event.

£100k on new ways for Merton to get active

The first round of our Borough of Sport Grant Fund has been distributed, with £100k being shared amongst 23 projects across the borough.

Becoming a Borough of Sport means creating and supporting new ways for every Merton resident, no matter their background, to embrace their chosen way of moving more.

To achieve this, the council is collaborating with professional clubs, sporting bodies and community organisations, and working to put Merton on the map for sport.

This £100k is the first round of funding, with more to come over the next two years to create even more opportunities to get active in Merton.



Our Borough of Sport missions

Read more and watch our film: merton.gov.uk/boroughofsport



© Matt Grayson

- 1** Everyone in Merton, no matter their background, has the opportunity to be active and access sport and physical activity.
- 2** Merton will be the natural home of sport in London, and will protect, preserve, and grow our sporting heritage.
- 3** Merton will have a thriving sports and leisure economy that benefits the local community.

A spotlight on some of the Borough of Sport grantees:



**Better Leisure
Dementia-friendly
swimming**

This new dedicated swimming session is completely free for residents living with dementia, and their carer, with a swimming teacher on hand for extra support. Signage and lighting are also used to make the environment as accessible as possible.

“Better is committed to inclusivity and community wellbeing in Merton. We look forward to welcoming people living with dementia to enjoy the benefits of swimming in a supportive environment that will enhance their quality of life.” **Ashleigh Wallace, General Manager, Canons Leisure Centre**

● Sessions at Canons Leisure Centre, Tuesdays 11am. Book online: www.better.org.uk



© FG Trade | iStock



**CDARS
Loves Cycling**

Loves Cycling aims to encourage people who receive support from Community Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services (CDARS) to cycle. The project will work with people who are vulnerable due to having poor mental health and those facing other barriers to activity, such as a neurodiverse condition.



Courtesy pixabay.com

“Cycling is not only good for the environment, it has many benefits for our physical and mental health. Our project aims to encourage safe and responsible cycling. Our cycling sessions are also a great way to create social connections in the community.” **Alexandra Thomas, Bid Manager, CDARS**

● Sessions running now, email info@cdars.org.uk



Merton Vision

The project seeks to empower vision-impaired individuals through tailored self-defence classes, targeting a diverse demographic: children, young adults with learning difficulties, and adults.



© tirc83 | iStock

“This initiative marks a significant milestone for us, offering far more than just self-defence training. The sessions will empower individuals with visual impairments, instilling confidence and essential life skills that will positively impact all areas of their lives. Thank you for believing in our mission and for helping us make a meaningful difference.” **Kevin Gregory, CEO Merton Vision**

● To learn more about the sessions, visit: mertonvision.org.uk



**Jigsaw4u
Pump It Up**

A new programme which will create sports opportunities for children and young people aged four to 16 with Special Educational Needs or a Disability. Qualified and professional coaches offer adapted BMX, boxing, and dance sessions to engage children, increase their activity levels, boost their self-esteem, and inspire long-term engagement in sports.

“We have spoken to young people who identify as SEND and have selected the free and inclusive activities based on their choices. We look forward to helping lots of young people who might otherwise find them challenging to access.” **Stephen Loizou, Chief Executive Officer, Jigsaw4u**

● Email info@jigsaw4u.org.uk



Scan to read the full list of grant funded organisations.

Top marks for Merton secondary schools

As pupils start their first term at secondary school and families of children in Year 6 decide where they will apply for a place next September, we've highlighted why our schools are brilliant.

Raynes Park High School, rated good by Ofsted, specialises in sports education and its football programme is managed by Fulham FC. The school has recently opened new tennis courts, which are part-funded by the Tim Henman Foundation and its pupils serve as ball boys and girls at The Championships, Wimbledon.

Harris Academy Merton, rated Outstanding by Ofsted, embodies the Borough of Sport ethos, recently receiving the London School Sports School of the Year award from Basketball England for its exceptional commitment to the game.

Harris Academy Morden, rated Outstanding by Ofsted, has a wide range of extra curricular activities, including dodgeball, dance, table tennis, Chinese and Korean. It hosts the Merton School Sport Partnership, creating opportunities for all pupils to take part in physical education, including girls and boys with special educational needs.

Ricards Lodge High School, Wimbledon is an Outstanding, oversubscribed and successful comprehensive school for girls with a thriving co-educational sixth form. The school vision is to Educate Successful Women of the Future. Applications to sixth form are open to all including to their 16+ Girls' Rugby Academy in partnership with Harlequins.

Rutlish School is rated Outstanding and is named after its benefactor, William Rutlish, who was an embroiderer to King Charles II. The school, founded by John Innes, has been educating students for 129 years, and is an integral part of the Rutlish Foundation alongside the Old Rutlishian's Association. The school is renowned for developing student experiences and its enrichment activities which include sport, music, drama, art, its Combined Cadet Force and ball boys at The Championships, Wimbledon. Rutlish School has close links with other local organisations such as Cranleigh Tennis Club, The Wilton Tennis Club, and the Dons Local Action Group.

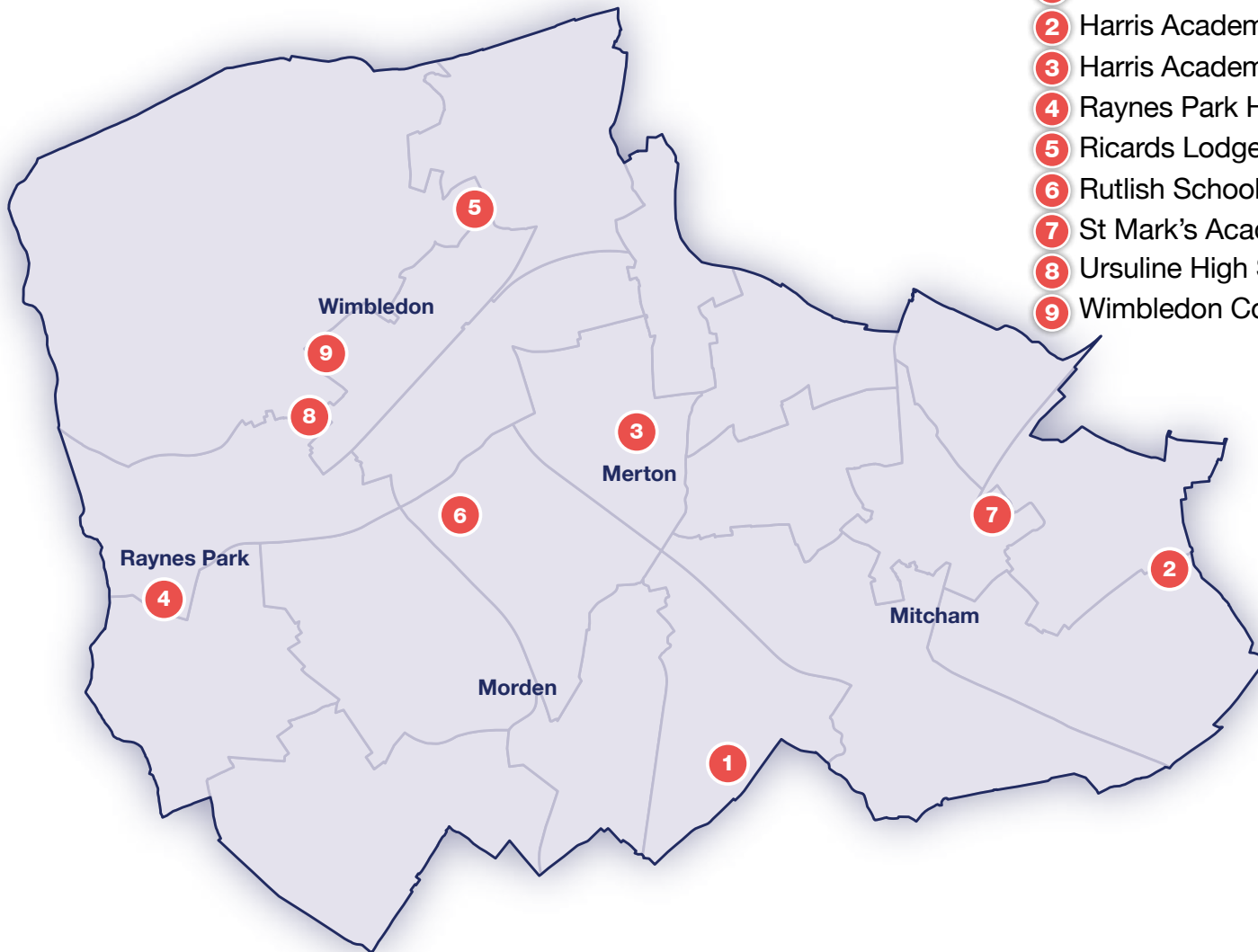


© Dave Inglis

Harris Academy Wimbledon opened in 2018 in a state-of-the-art building in South Wimbledon to meet the demand for school places. Rated Outstanding by Ofsted, it specialises in music and has a ukulele orchestra, a song-writing circle and African drumming workshops.

School locations

- 1 Harris Academy Morden
- 2 Harris Academy Merton
- 3 Harris Academy Wimbledon
- 4 Raynes Park High School
- 5 Ricards Lodge High School
- 6 Rutlish School
- 7 St Mark's Academy
- 8 Ursuline High School
- 9 Wimbledon College



St Mark's Academy in Mitcham has recently been rated Outstanding by Ofsted. It was visited by Queen Elizabeth II as part of her Diamond Jubilee and counts acclaimed rapper Dave among its alumni. He mentioned the school in his acceptance speech after winning the Best Hip Hop/Rap/Grime Act award at the *BRIT Awards* in 2022.

Ursuline High School, Wimbledon, is a popular oversubscribed Roman Catholic girls' secondary school which enjoys exceptional outcomes at GCSE, A Level, T Level and vocational qualifications. The school is recognised for being in the top 10% of schools nationally for students' academic progress which complements the extensive enrichment and pastoral provision on offer.

Wimbledon College, is a Jesuit, Roman Catholic, boys' secondary school, rated Good by Ofsted and Outstanding by Diocesan inspectors. Welcoming pupils of all academic

backgrounds and faiths, it focuses on developing the whole person, encouraging pupils to strive for excellence in all that they do, becoming individuals for others. It achieves this through first rate academic and pastoral provision alongside extensive extracurricular opportunities including music, drama and a wide variety of representative sports, including rugby, football, cricket and basketball. Facilities include a swimming pool and new World Rugby/FIFA standard 3G pitch.

A series of open events are now being held at all secondary schools in the borough.

The closing date to apply for your child's secondary school place for September 2025 is 31 October 2024.

Find out more merton.gov.uk/schools



Pupils from St Mark's Academy in Mitcham opening their GCSE results



Photos © Rebecca Cresta

Making the grade

As students across the UK opened their GCSE and vocational results this year, those in Merton had an extra reason to celebrate. Despite a national dip in outcomes, especially in critical subjects like English and maths, Merton schools once again outperformed national averages.

Merton schools have bucked the national trend, showing strong improvements, particularly at higher grade levels. This success is not just a testament to the students' efforts but also to the unwavering dedication of the borough's teachers, school leaders, and support staff.

Among the many success stories in Merton this year are twins Joanna and Lydia, students at St Mark's Academy, who both achieved incredible results, and bravely opened their results live in front of BBC News cameras.

Merton students are now poised to take the next steps in their educational journeys, whether that be in further education, apprenticeships, or vocational training.

Twin sisters, Joanna (left) and Lydia (right), from St Mark's Academy, receive their outstanding GCSE results



A Level, T Level, and BTEC success

As students across Merton received their A Level, T Level, and BTEC results, the borough had much to celebrate, securing results that exceeded national averages and opening doors to exciting futures.

The provisional pass rate for A Levels in Merton has once again surpassed the national average, particularly at the crucial A*–C grades. Students pursuing T Levels – new vocational qualifications designed to prepare them for the

workforce – achieved remarkable success, with a 100% pass rate. An impressive 88% of these students earned Merit and Distinction grades. Similarly, those who studied applied general and vocational programmes saw improved results, compared to last year.

The students' success reflects both their own hard work and the ongoing support they've received from their schools, teachers, and families.



Eoin Kelly, Headteacher, Ursuline High School, celebrates with students receiving their results

Photos © Rebecca Cresta



Laura Howarth, Headteacher, Rutlish School, hugs a student after receiving his A Level results



Rutlish students celebrate their exam results



Making music with the lockdown generation

Music teachers from three primary schools have shared their enthusiasm for the Mini Musicians programme and the positive impact it has had on their pupils.



Sarah Dearlove from Bond Primary School, highlighted the personal and educational benefits: “The Mini Musicians programme is probably one of the highlights of my teaching career. Seeing the children go from hardly any musical experience to confidently singing, creating melodies, and composing is a beautiful thing. It’s also crucial in aiding language acquisition and development, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 lockdowns.”

Mini Musicians is a groundbreaking, two-year initiative that offers specialist music sessions to more than 650 primary-aged pupils at ten Merton schools. It is funded by Merton Council and delivered by Merton Music Foundation.

Now at the halfway point, this pioneering project is designed to research how music lessons help pupils in the rest of their education. It is aimed at children who were babies during the COVID-19 pandemic and missed out on important developmental milestones, due to lockdown.

Here’s what they had to say...

Emily Pahlawan, a music teacher at Benedict Academy, reflected on the programme’s impact: “I just really, really love seeing how the kids are growing in confidence. They start with just responding intuitively to music and then, over time, putting words to what they are doing. The comprehensive set of skills they develop, from physical awareness to abstract thinking, really supports their overall growth.”



Photos © Rebecca Cresta

Sally Hickson, a music teacher from Merton Abbey Primary School, spoke about the programme’s role in supporting cognitive and emotional development: “It’s about igniting joy in the pupils for music, while also supporting their maths skills, cognitive learning and teamwork. The enthusiasm from both students and educators is clear, and the programme’s success is evident.”

By the end of the programme, students who are now in Year 2 will have mastered the melodica and received the inclusive Trinity College Awards and Certificates in Musical Development, culminating in a celebratory summer concert.

Celebrating Black History Month



Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah,
Cabinet Member for
Sport and Heritage

“**B**lack History Month is celebrated every October, and it recognises the rich history, culture, and contributions of Black people in the UK and globally.

“Merton is home to vibrant and diverse Black communities, and as someone of Black heritage, originally from Liberia in West Africa, I believe it’s important that we shine light on Black stories and history. I encourage every resident to participate in the local events taking place throughout the month to learn how Black individuals have shaped Britain and right here in Merton.

“This year’s theme, Reclaiming Narratives, focuses on recognising and correcting the narratives of Black history to showcase the untold success stories and the full complexity of Black heritage. In line with this, Merton Libraries have organised a series of events and activities throughout the month. From engaging displays and exhibitions to insightful talks, there are lots of opportunities to explore and learn more about Black history, including first hand stories from residents within our own community.”

Here are some of the activities taking place:

8 October **The Spirit of James Baldwin**

Presented by Dr Michelle Yaa Asantewa.

7pm, Wimbledon Library.
libraries.merton.gov.uk/events

15 October **The Wilberforce Trail**

Presented by Richard Smart from the Salvation Army.

10.30am, West Barnes Library.
libraries.merton.gov.uk/events

7–24 October **Library displays**

Step Back in Time – lesser-known aspects of London’s Black history.

Pollards Hill Library
From Slavery to Stardom – the life of boxer Bill Richmond.

Wimbledon Library
Cultural Pioneers – a celebration of Black history in Mitcham.

Mitcham Library
Did You Know? – aspects of Black history.
Colliers Wood Library
merton.gov.uk/heritage

24 October– 6 November **Lifting the Lens**

A photographic celebration of Merton’s Black Culture.

An exhibition featuring photographs by pupils at Merton schools.

Morden Library. Free entry.
merton.gov.uk/heritage

22 and 29 October **Reggae Babies**

A unique sensory experience for babies and toddlers.

10–11am, 22 October, Morden Library. 29 October, Pollards Hill Library.

libraries.merton.gov.uk/events

Award-winning author and event organiser,
Dr Michelle Yaa Asantewa



What's on in Merton

A roundup of events across the borough to look forward to this autumn.

3 October– 14 November Soft Support

Carers are being invited to help create a collective textile artwork during a series of workshops for them to have a break from their responsibilities and meet other carers. These stitch and chat sessions with pre-loved fabrics, run by Gal Lesham, are funded by Arts Council England and will create cushions for seated areas in our libraries.

11am, Canons House and Grounds in Mitcham. Free entry.
merton.events.mylibrary.digital

7–12 October Libraries Week

A diverse array of exciting events will be held in our seven award-winning libraries. These range from upcycling sewing workshops and craft activities to author talks and readings.

merton.gov.uk/libraryevents

14–20 October Get Online Week

Our libraries will mark the UK's largest digital inclusion initiative with a range of activities to help people get online, including IT training, coding workshops, and family history research sessions. Devices, including laptops and tablets, are available for residents who are not online at home to borrow through Connecting Merton, our tech lending project.

merton.gov.uk/libraryevents

17–27 October Wimbledon BookFest

London's leading literary festival returns for its 17th year this autumn, bringing readers and writers together for a packed programme of events over ten days. Authors taking part include Mary Berry, Clare Balding, Rick Stein, Elif Shafak, Robert Harris, Richard E. Grant, Zeinab Badawi, Alex Wheatle and Tracy Chevalier.

Events take place in three venues – Wimbledon Library, Wimbledon High School and at the New Wimbledon Theatre. There are a range of ticket prices. Arts Council England are funding free tickets for many events in Wimbledon Library for residents living in postcodes CR4, CR7, SM3 and SM4.
wimbledonbookfest.org



Various dates Merton Big Read

Wimbledon BookFest events about

Merton's Big Read 2024, *Brooklyn* by Colm Tóibín, will be taking place throughout the year, including a visit by the author to Wimbledon in December.

You can borrow a copy of the international bestseller in paperback, e-book and audiobook from our libraries. There are also opportunities for you to win a signed copy of the sequel, *Long Island*, which was published earlier this year.

wimbledonbookfest.org/merton-big-read

31 October– 14 November Heritage displays

There will be free heritage displays at all seven of our award-winning libraries, commemorating local heroes, including pilots, the Home Guard, soldiers, sailors and war poets. These exhibitions will offer a snapshot into what life was like in Merton during the First and Second World Wars, covering air raid shelters, bomb damage, rationing, evacuation and victory parades.

merton.gov.uk/heritage

3 October and 16 November Protect yourself from scams

Community safety officers, trading standards and the police will be running two free events to raise awareness of scams – online, on the telephone, via messaging or in person. **3 October, 11am–1pm, Morden Baptist Church in Crown Lane, Morden.** **16 November, 11am–1pm, St Mark's Church, St Marks Road, Mitcham.**
merton.gov.uk/scams



4 and 18 November **Tuned In**

Join legendary bassist Jah Wobble and John Klein for a jamming session, which is open to anyone interested in meeting new people and playing music together.

7–10pm at Merton Arts Space in Wimbledon Library.
merton.gov.uk/tunedin

and rationing, to bomb damage, civil defence and war work, during a talk by our heritage officer, Sarah Gould, as part of West Barnes Local History Programme.
10.30am–12 noon, West Barnes Library. Free entry. Book a place by calling 020 8274 5789 or online: merton.events.mylibrary.digital

23 November **Winter fair**

Stalls will be selling books, gifts and homemade cakes. There will also be a dance demonstration and a tombola.

11.30am–2pm, St. Matthew's Church, Durham Road, West Wimbledon.
stmatthewswimbledon.org

29 November **Christmas lights switch-on**



Join us for festive family fun at our borough's Christmas lights switch-on and tree illumination, including carol singing, entertainment and mince pies.

The location and timings will be confirmed closer to the date.
merton.gov.uk/christmas

Add your events to our free online events calendar.
merton.gov.uk/eventscalendar

10 and 11 November **Remembrance and Armistice Day services**

Services will be held to mark Remembrance Sunday at the war memorials in Mitcham and Wimbledon and outside the Nelson Health Centre in South Wimbledon. Armistice Day services will be held outside Merton Civic Centre in Morden and at Mitcham War Memorial.
merton.gov.uk/remembrance

19 November **Merton and Morden in World War Two**

Learn about life on the Home Front – from evacuation



Revitalising Mitcham

Mitcham is home to a dynamic community that cares deeply about the area and its huge potential to better serve those who live, work and visit there – with more culture, a thriving local economy, and events and nature that bring people together.



The council wants to put Mitcham on the map as a revitalised area that celebrates its strong local identity.

Mitcham town centre has so much to offer, with the Fair Green and Market Square at its heart, and lots of possibilities for growth and improvement.

The council undertook a big conversation with Mitcham locals – this was called the Mitcham Matters consultation. It aimed to shed light on ways the council could improve local services and infrastructure that would keep Mitcham’s special character and respect its heritage, while taking it into the future. Almost 700 people from all age groups responded to the consultation, and a focused survey with young people got almost 100 responses. People shared their views on what would improve public spaces, particularly the town centre and Market Square.

The consultation highlighted that Mitcham is an important hub for residents in Merton. Among the responses, people said nature and seating would improve public spaces, and play areas were important to people aged 25–44 years old. Three quarters of respondents said that more bars and restaurants would improve the





Mitcham residents have spoken – and here’s what we’ve done in response

- A new, monthly Mitcham Market hosts small businesses, including food and crafts
- Our Parks run free, weekly 60-minute exercise classes on Fair Green. www.ourparks.org.uk
- A pop-up youth club takes place every Friday on Market Square, in partnership with the Salvation Army and the Detached Youth Work Team
- An evening Dinner Club took place with free stalls for local food businesses serving a variety of cuisines
- The town centre hosted a Winter Weekend event, with a synthetic ice rink and Christmas market
- Local groups have held events in the town centre, including the D-Day celebrations
- Local businesses have accessed free business advice from Grow Local London
- New public bins have been installed
- More greenery has been planted along Sibthorpe Road Car Park and Holborn Way to improve the biodiversity of the town centre
- The town centre has a new defibrillator, donated by FM Conway, to improve public safety
- Many new businesses have opened in the last couple of months, so please go and support them!
- Safety is a priority with improved CCTV and Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams working in the town centre to increase visibility, reduce crime and build trust with the local community, supported by the council’s Community Safety Team
- A Safe Zone now operates on the last Friday evening of each month. Manned by Merton Street Pastors, this is a safe space for those feeling unsafe or vulnerable who need support



town centre, with cultural activities and health services also rated highly.

An overwhelming majority of people (84%) said they would like themed market events in the market square, with community, family and evening events also flagged as top priorities.

The council is on a shared journey with residents to help put Mitcham on the map as a revived area

with a stronger local identity – a neighbourhood for everyone – those who have called Mitcham home for decades, or years or even months.

Over the past year, the council has responded to residents’ feedback and will continue to do so. We have a new Mitcham Town Centre Manager in post, Mark Warren, who has been working hard on activities, improvements and opportunities in the area.

Mark said: “We’re excited about the future of Mitcham town centre, which will be shaped by the communities it serves. Meaningful growth will happen, with local people empowered to make positive changes in partnership with the council. Watch this space for further developments. There’s lots of exciting things happening in Mitcham, and there is more to come!”





(L-R) Enjoy refreshments at Merton Abbey Mills or stroll through Morden's Kendor Gardens

Merton's hidden gems

Here's our pick of charms to discover whilst exploring the borough.

Whether it's quirky, historical details you didn't know; that beautiful building you've always wondered about or that secret park tucked away – there is so much to see and do around here, that even our residents haven't caught onto yet.

Colliers Wood – a bohemian community with history

Merton Abbey Mills, situated by the magical river Wandle, is home to a lot of history. It was originally a textile factory from the early eighteenth century, most famously used by the world-renowned William Morris, a founder of the British Arts and Crafts movement. It even has a fully restored, operational waterwheel, one of the only surviving ones in the area.

Today, Merton Abbey Mills is home to a vibrant community of independent businesses offering interesting, arty places in which to shop, eat, drink and enjoy. There really is something for everyone, including tattoo artists, bakers, yoga classes, tea rooms, Thai food, pottery shops, a

creperie, pubs, theatre, crystal and rock shops, local gin, vegan food and so much more.

Merton Abbey Mills makes a perfect family day out, a lovely place to spend an evening over some food and drink or somewhere to explore when you just want a bit of 'me' time.

Where: Just ten minutes' walk up the Wandle path from Colliers Wood Tube station.

www.mertonabbeymills.org.uk

Raynes Park – your new favourite shortcut

A hidden 1.2km walking and cycling path from New Malden to Raynes Park provides a direct and entirely traffic-free route. The path runs parallel to the railway line, and under the A3 Kingston bypass, making a great shortcut. Journey times by bike from one end to the other take an average of just nine minutes.

Where: The path starts at Raynes Park Recreation Ground.





The Acacia Adventure Playground, Mitcham

Morden – a very unusual park

Just behind Morden Tube station, Kendor Gardens might just be one of the most unique parks you have ever been to. A long thin rectangle in shape, this park was the original Tube line from Morden. The park runs perfectly parallel to the new Northern Line directly below and, when you walk through it, locals report that you can hear and feel the rumble of Tube trains beneath you as they set off every few minutes. It really is a one-off experience if you fancy a short walk.



The park is a real community gem and is lovingly looked after by the Friends of Kendor Gardens, who run sessions with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Community Payback groups, mental health therapy groups, volunteers and young people. They have even created a very fancy

bug hotel; sensory herb gardens in planters for some of the volunteers who are blind; and have grown wonderful flowers. The friends group meets twice a week on Thursdays and Sundays at 10.30am – all welcome to join – just come along!

Where: Kenley Road, a three-minute walk from Morden Tube station.

Mitcham – a playground full of adventure

The Acacia Adventure Playground really is a hidden gem. This free oasis caters for children and young people aged between five and 16-years-old. It offers kids a chance to get outside and experience an inclusive, stimulating, physically challenging play environment, where they can explore and express themselves freely with support from our wonderful staff. The playground makes the most of nature, which includes den building and playing in water, sand and mud.

Where: Acacia Adventure Playground, 230 Acacia Road, Mitcham.

Open: Most weekdays after school and during school holidays. Times vary, depending on the age of your child.

merton.gov.uk/adventure-playground-acacia

Follow
@Merton_Council
 on Instagram
 to watch our
#MertonGems
 video series.

Opening for bidders

Merton's Civic Pride Investing in Neighbourhoods and Community Climate Action Funds 2024.

Merton's Civic Pride Investing in Neighbourhoods and Community Climate Action Funds 2024

will soon be opening for applications. The bidding round will be open for five weeks.

- The £750,000 Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund is for projects to address demands

placed on neighbourhoods by new development, such as housing.

- The £166,000 Community Climate Action Fund is to support community-led projects that help reduce carbon emissions or build resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Some of the previous recipients of Merton's civic pride funding talk about the impact the money has made in the community



Dorchie Cockerell
Manager, Merton Saints BMX Club



Applications will be open from the week starting 30 September, for five weeks. Find out more merton.gov.uk/civicpridefunds

“We run BMX racing sessions for all ages and all standards – from beginners to intermediate and experts. People can come here and enjoy the track, develop their confidence on a bike, and improve their fitness.

“The start gate is key to BMX racing because it's quite a technical, difficult part of the race. We applied to Merton Council for the Civic Pride Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund, and they've given us a very generous grant to rebuild the BMX start hill and put in a new

Olympic standard start gate, which is the only one in London. The start hill has been rebuilt so we can host regional standard racing and national standard racing, which we haven't been able to do for a long time. If we didn't have a start hill or a start gate, the club will not be able to develop and grow. We've also got LED lighting, making us one of only three BMX tracks in London that has this.

“Thanks very much, Merton Council. You guys have been amazing. Honestly, this is really game-changing for us.”



Ian Solomon-Kawall
Co-Founder & Director,
May Project Gardens

“The grant will enable May Project Gardens to deliver our two flagship programmes – Natural City Living and the Hip-Hop Garden Project.

“Natural City Living is about making urban areas greener and more sustainable. It focuses on creating spaces where nature and city life can coexist, helping people live in a way that’s good for both them and the environment.

“The Hip-Hop Garden Project combines gardening with hip-hop culture to engage young people. It uses music, art, and gardening to teach life skills, promote creativity, and encourage healthy living in a fun and relatable way.

“For the last 17 years, May Project Gardens has pioneered affordable, grassroots, creative, community-based solutions to include and empower people who are most impacted by climate change.”



Hannah Neale
BAME Voice Chair and
Director of Operations,
BAME Community
Climate Action –
Knowledge Exchange
& Empowerment
Project

“Local charity, BAME Voice, in partnership with climate charity ASHDEN, is thrilled to receive funding from the Community Climate Action Fund to implement a project which will help provide a better understanding of the lived experience of Merton-based BAME communities in the context of climate policies and climate action.

“The funding offers a unique opportunity to engage with Merton’s BAME communities; give them a voice on climate policies and initiatives; be part of identifying solutions to reduce carbon emissions, and in the process, adapting their lifestyles and livelihoods to worsening climate impacts.”



Geeta Kohli
Community Dementia
Adviser and Referrals
Coordinator, Merton
Memory Hub

“The Civic Pride Investing in Neighbourhoods grant to the Attic Theatre Company’s community engagement programme funded Feel Good Friday, which is a very energetic dance group for people affected by dementia and their families. It could be salsa, Bollywood or mainstream music and worldwide dance styles.

“It just helps them get out, be healthy, meet new people, feel energetic and more engaged.”



Matt Walters
Coaching Programme
Director, Merton
School Sport
Partnership

“We’re really grateful for the Civic Pride Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund. We got a really generous pot of just over £130,000, which has been absolutely crucial in setting up our programme for the next generation of sports coaches.

“The funding is being used to pay for facilities and tutors to train 17 and 18-year-old BTEC students on how to coach sports, including cricket and football. As part of this, they are doing placements in schools and we hope that some of them will continue their physical education studies at university.”

On patrol in the community

You may have spotted teams of council officers from our community safety, regulatory services and waste enforcement teams in high-vis jackets out and about recently. *iN Merton* went to meet them to find out more about what they are doing to reduce anti-social behaviour.

It's a wet Wednesday evening when the Safer Streets Enforcement Patrol sets off from outside Colliers Wood Tube station.

But there's a spring in the step of the three council officers and the three police officers accompanying them, on one of the first patrols of a three-month pilot scheme.

The aim of the initiative is to tackle anti-social behaviour and increase the visibility of council officers outside office hours. There are three patrols a week, which are all run during evenings and weekends, when residents are more likely to be at home.

Council officers want to talk to as many people as possible about what can be done to make their area feel safer. Although Merton has consistently been one of London's safest boroughs, anti-social behaviour has remained a concern for residents, so we are committed to doing everything we can to tackle issues including littering, street drinking, noise nuisance and parking – all of which make a difference to the quality of people's everyday lives.

Just a few minutes into the patrol, officers come across a fly-tip, which is immediately reported to our contractor, Veolia, to come and remove. A key part of the patrol's role is to look out for issues which can be resolved by the council and each patrol is made up of council officers with different areas of expertise, from waste to licensing.

Working in partnership with the police is key to sharing local knowledge. On another patrol in Wimbledon, the council's CCTV team assisted police with gathering evidence against a beggar who breached a community protection notice – a sanction which can be issued against someone who persistently behaves in an anti-social way. In a separate incident, CCTV footage helped to identify some young people who were causing disorder in Wimbledon town centre. Meanwhile, in Mitcham, action is being taken against a group of street drinkers, who are responsible for anti-social behaviour.

The exact route that each patrol will take is mapped out based on reports from residents about anti-social behaviour and also passes any known hot spots. Ours starts in a busy high street, goes through green spaces, along the river, past an industrial area and into a housing estate. The patrol officers say a cheery





If there are any environmental issues in your neighbourhood, you can report them at any time via the Report via Fix My Street app **fixmystreet**. merton.gov.uk

Noise nuisance can be reported on our website merton.gov.uk/noise

“hello” to everyone they meet and strike up conversations with as many people as possible, to encourage them to report issues which are blighting their neighbourhood.

One of the council officers said: “Every patrol is different and there has been a lot of curiosity from residents who are keen to find out what we are doing. Each patrol is a real team effort between different council departments – I really enjoy liaising with colleagues to help solve issues for residents.”

Some residents need a bit of extra support. We come across a place where a rough sleeper is seeking shelter. Although no-one is there, the council officers have a good idea who is living there and check with colleagues from the housing team what support is in place and if anything else can be done to help this individual.

The patrols will run until the end of October – details will be posted on Nextdoor, the social media app for neighbourhoods, in advance.

Musical Fireworks Displays

FUNFAIR | STREET FOOD | CRAFT BEER

Morden Park
Saturday 2 November

Wimbledon Park
Tuesday 5 November

merton.gov.uk/fireworks

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You may be eligible for a loan funded by Merton Council

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Solar
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Exclusively for homeowners and private landlords

www.lendology.org.uk/merton-loans

lendology.cic

Find out more >>>



LONDON BOROUGH OF
MERTON

We recommend that you conduct an independent retrofit assessment to establish whether any works to your home are likely to be suitable for your property.

Lendology CIC is a community interest company limited by guarantee, registered in England, company number 4512225. Registered address: Heatherton Park Studios, Bradford on Tone, Taunton TA4 1EU. Lendology CIC is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (675263) for credit regulated activities.

Your ideas wanted on how to spend new, one-off £15m council fund

We want to hear from you on how we can make a lasting difference to Merton.

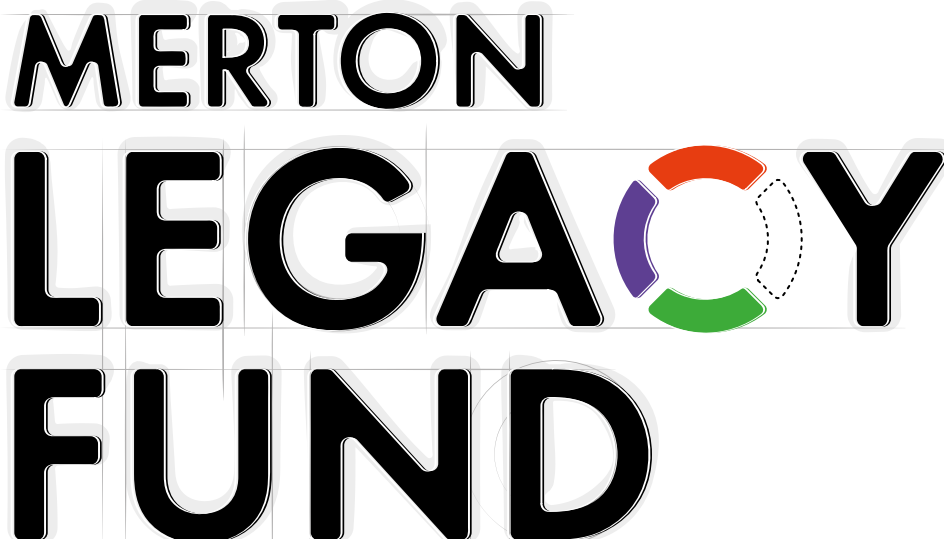
With councils up and down the country facing significant financial pressures, there's never been a more important time for us to get value for money for our residents, show sound management of our resources, and reflect what's important to you in how we spend our budget.

Here in Merton, innovative thinking and good commercial decision-making mean that we have the chance to spend a specific pot of money to make significant and lasting changes to our neighbourhoods.

In May 2023, we sold a company that we had previously set up called CHAS. Since we created it in 1997, CHAS has become the leading national provider of risk prevention, compliance and supply chain management services across the public sector, construction, education and transport industries. It represents more than 30,000 contractors, with more than 2,500 clients to date. Last year, we decided the time was right to sell it to new owners, raising a one-off sum of £186m.

We will use this money to help build new council homes; improve our town centres and build new sporting infrastructure, as well as clear historic debt to put us on a sound footing and make secure investments which will help protect our frontline services as costs go up and demand continues to rise.

But we have set aside £15m from the overall pot for projects that you want to see. This is your chance to tell us the sort of things that you think will make a lasting difference.



On 15 October, we'll be launching our Merton Legacy Fund survey, where you will be able to put forward suggestions for how the money should be spent and we're looking forward to hearing your ideas.

In the same survey, you can also tell us what you think our priorities should be for our annual budget – which is how we spend our year-to-year funding.

To learn more about the Merton Legacy Fund and sign up for a reminder on the survey, visit merton.gov.uk/MertonLegacyFund



Towards Employment

Tell us what support you need to get into work or get into training and we will provide you with:

- Gift vouchers or your choice
- Guaranteed interviews for roles we secure
- Travel expenses
- Lunch
- Fully paid training courses
- Employability support guided by you!

Email us at

towardsemployment@merton.gov.uk

follow us on insta @ [towardsemployment1](#)

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON



Funded by
UK Government



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



**Merton
College**

Courses for Work, Life and Wellbeing

Learn something new with one of our exciting Adult Education Courses starting in September 2024. Whether you want to get back into education, enhance your skills for work, start your own business or improve your wellbeing, we have a range of subject areas on offer, including:

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

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.

DISTANCE LEARNING

We offer a variety of FREE short courses that you can complete at your own pace. These distance learning programmes, accredited by NCFE, typically take 4-8 weeks to finish. They are fully funded, so there is no cost to you. Upon completion, you will achieve a nationally recognised Level 2 qualification.



See website for a 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 THE LATEST COURSE INFORMATION AND TO ENROL: STCG.AC.UK/ADULT-EDUCATION

Merton College, London Road, Morden, SM4 5QX • mae@stcg.ac.uk • 020 8918 7777

[f](#) educationmerton [X](#) @AdultEdMerton [i](#) /adulthoodeducationmerton

Working on behalf of



(L-R) Dave and Pam with Liudmyla

The kindness of strangers

Making a home for refugees.

With space in their family home, Dave and Pam from Wimbledon, applied for the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme to host a refugee fleeing the war in Ukraine.

"It's just us at home, as the kids have left. When the Syrian refugee scheme was open, we had thought about applying but the scheme closed. When the Ukraine scheme opened, we signed up," said Pam.

Following the application, Merton Council contacted Dave and Pam with more information and arranged to visit their property to make sure it was suitable. Pam and Dave matched with Liudmyla, 43, through the Homes for Ukraine scheme and she has been living with them for a year and a half now.

"It was the first time a stranger had lived with us at home, and though we felt a bit nervous, we focused on welcoming our guest. For us retired people, having a younger person in the house adds life and vitality. It's been enriching as we've been able to learn about another country, and a new way of looking at things.

Liudmyla is a fantastic cook, and she's made us delicious Ukrainian food. We've been fortunate that Liudmyla has fitted in very well and we all get along. Since she's been here, her English is so much better, she's working and has become very capable," said Dave.

We asked Dave and Pam what their advice would be to someone considering opening their home to those fleeing the war in Ukraine, as part of this scheme.

Pam said: "Think about how you would feel having someone in your home for at least six months – will it fit your life? You can contact the council for support, which has been very helpful. For us, it's been a rewarding experience, and very stimulating. It has broadened our horizons and we have had lots of new experiences."

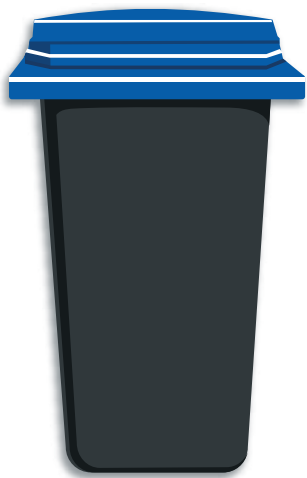
Merton needs more hosts like Pam and Dave to take part in the Homes for Ukraine scheme. If you have at least one spare room and can provide six months of stable accommodation, please get in touch – you can change the course of someone's life. As a host, you can access an optional 'thank you' payment.

Find out more:
[merton.org.uk/
Ukraine](https://merton.org.uk/Ukraine)

Rescue your rubbish

Rescue Me is the theme of this year's Recycle Week. The campaign, which runs from 14–20 October, is all about rescuing recyclable items from the rubbish bin, ensuring that materials like plastic, glass, paper, and metal are given a second chance, rather than being incinerated.

By recycling properly, we conserve natural resources, save energy, and reduce pollution. But despite our best intentions, many recyclable items still end up in the general waste bin, where they cannot be recovered. Can it be recycled? If so, it belongs in the recycling bin.



Top recycling tips:

Double check before tossing: Always check if an item, like plastic bottles, glass jars, or paper, can be recycled before discarding it.

Reduce waste: Minimise waste by choosing products with less packaging, buying in bulk, and opting for reusable items like shopping bags, water bottles, and containers instead of single-use plastics.

Reuse whenever possible: Before throwing something away, think about how it might be reused. Glass jars can be repurposed for storage, takeaway cartons for food storage, and old clothes can be donated or upcycled.

Clean and sort recyclables: Rinse recyclables to remove food residue, preventing contamination and ensuring they can be processed.

Use separate bins: Set up clearly labelled bins at home to keep recyclables separate from general waste, making it easier to recycle correctly.

Flatten items: Flatten cardboard boxes and containers to save space in your recycling bin, and help with efficient processing.

Recycle on the go: Use our public recycling bins when you're out and about, rather than putting recycling in general waste bins.

Spread the word: Encourage friends, family, and neighbours to join the *Rescue Me* effort by sharing tips on reusing and recycling waste.

Swap disposable vapes for refillable, reusable ones to significantly decrease the number of harmful items that need to be disposed of.



Dispose of batteries and vapes safely

There has been a concerning rise in fires caused by the incorrect disposal of batteries, vapes, and e-cigarettes. These items should never be mixed with other waste as they pose significant fire risks and environmental hazards. Instead, they must be stored and disposed of separately.

Merton residents can recycle batteries by placing them in an untied plastic bag alongside their recycling bin, where this service is available. Additionally, batteries, vapes, and e-cigarettes can be safely disposed of at designated disposal points, or you can bring them to Garth Road Household Reuse and Recycling Centre in Morden for proper disposal.

You can find your nearest recycling points on Recycle Now's website: www.recyclenow.com

Directory

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 and Freedom Passes for disabled people

merton.gov.uk/bluebadge

merton.gov.uk/freedompasses

concessionarytravel@merton.gov.uk

020 8274 4990 (11am–3pm)

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)

Council tax

merton.gov.uk/counciltax

local.taxation@merton.gov.uk

020 8274 4904 (9am–1pm)

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

Fly-tipping

Report fly-tipping on public roads.

merton.gov.uk/flytipping

020 8274 4902

Freedom Passes for older people

londoncouncils.gov.uk/freedom-pass

0300 330 1433 (Monday to Sunday
8am–8pm). Calls charged at local rate

Garden waste collection service

merton.gov.uk/gardenwaste

020 8274 4902

Housing benefit

merton.gov.uk/housingbenefit

housing.benefits@merton.gov.uk

020 8274 4903 (9am–1pm)

Housing register

merton.gov.uk/allocations

registration@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3305

Leisure

Hall hire, school holiday activities, sports pitches and courts.

merton.gov.uk/leisure

leisure@merton.gov.uk

Licensing

licensing@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3969

MASCOT Telecare

Helps people to live safely and independently in their own homes.

Available 24/7 using technology linked to our response centre.

merton.gov.uk/mascot

020 8274 5940

Parking

Penalty Charge Notices, parking permits and car parks.

merton.gov.uk/parking

parking@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 4661 (11am–4pm)

Planning

merton.gov.uk/planning

planning@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3777 (1–3pm)

Register office

Contact the register office if you want to get married, have a civil ceremony or civil partnership, register a birth or death, name a baby or take part in a citizenship ceremony.

merton.gov.uk/register

register.office@merton.gov.uk

020 8274 5777

Morden Park House, Morden Park

London Road, Morden SM4 5QU

Opening hours 9am–4.30pm

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

Street cleaning

merton.gov.uk/street-care-cleaning

020 8274 4902

Street lighting

merton.gov.uk/streetlighting

trafficandhighways@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3700 (10am–4pm)

Trading standards

merton.gov.uk/tradingstandards

tradingstandards@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3025 (9am–5pm)

Information correct at the time of printing, but may change.

MORE WAYS TO MOVE IN MERTON

Join the movement for a healthier Merton. From social workouts to stress-free swims, you'll find your groove at your local Better Leisure Centre.

better.org.uk/merton



Better is a registered trademark and trading name of GLL (Greenwich Leisure Limited), a charitable social enterprise and registered society under the Co-operative & Community Benefit & Societies Act 2014 registration no. 27793R. Registered office: Middlegate House, The Royal Arsenal, London SE18 6SX. Inland Revenue Charity no: XR43398