



LONDON BOROUGH OF
IN MERTON

**BUILDING
NEW
COUNCIL
HOMES**



Merton
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INSIDE

**Breaking ground for
first new council homes
in a generation**

ISSUE 09 • January 2026
News and information from your council



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IN MERTON

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Happy new year – all the best for 2026!

Looking back, 2025 was a great year for Merton. We were named one of the best places to live in the UK by The Times; the fourth happiest London borough by property platform Rightmove; saw every local school rated Good or Better by Ofsted; expanded our pop-up tips, so there's one in every neighbourhood four times a year; reinstated weekly street cleaning; deployed a Safer Streets Team to tackle anti-social behaviour; began planting 1,000 new street trees, and celebrated Merton's 60th birthday with a free festival for over 10,000 residents.

In 2026, we have even more to look forward to.

We've announced a £30m investment to kickstart Remaking Morden town centre – fulfilling our vision to grow the local economy, boost business, and create a new neighbourhood with homes for local people that reflect Morden's charm and heritage. To deliver these ambitious plans, we're seeking a private development partner to help us make the town centre work better for everyone.

Our investment reaches every corner of the borough. After receiving more than 1,400 ideas from residents for the £15m Merton Legacy Fund, our resident-led advisory board has shortlisted community projects for you to vote on. You can find out how to have your say on which projects should receive funding on page eight.

Everyone deserves a decent place to live – a place they are proud to call home. That's why I was delighted to break ground on the first council homes in a generation in Merton just before Christmas. In 2026, you will be able to see construction underway at Farm Road in Morden and Elm Nursery and Raleigh Gardens

in Mitcham. These new homes will be built by the council, managed by the council, and will benefit the whole community by providing homes for the local families who need them.

We're also pressing ahead with our ambition for Merton to become London's Borough of Sport, helping everyone get active. We've just announced our plans to build a brand-new sports hall at Morden Leisure Centre, that will have a lasting legacy for generations to enjoy. This multi-million pound investment is alongside further improvements to sports facilities across the borough. Find out more on page 18. We're continuing to make sport more accessible through free and low-cost options, such as our free swimming for under 16s and over 65s offer.

Whether you're trying exercise for the first time or looking for a new challenge, there's something for everyone. Find out more about what's on offer on page 16. All of this is only possible because of our commitment to carefully managing taxpayers' money and securing value for money in all we do. In 2026, your council will continue to provide better services and better value and deliver more for you and your family.

Stay up to date on how Merton Council is doing more for you by signing up to receive our weekly News iN Merton e-newsletter at merton.gov.uk/newsletter

Best wishes,

Councillor Ross Garrod
Leader of Merton Council

RE
MAKING
**MOR
DEN**



© Rebecca Bryers photography



30 things to do and see in Morden

Rediscover Morden and see how many experiences you can tick off our list.

To coincide with the announcement that the council is investing £30m in regenerating Morden, we've put together a list of 30 things to do and see in and around the town centre.

As well as excellent transport connections, Morden has an array of green spaces, places to eat and socialise and many leisure and cultural opportunities. Here are a few of the highlights.

Morden Hall Park's wetland boardwalk

The wetland in Morden Hall Park is fed by the River Wandle and is teeming with wildlife. The boardwalk has viewing platforms, where visitors can do some birdwatching. Little egret and snipe join the resident birds in the winter.

Morden Park House

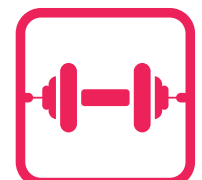
This Grade II listed building, dating from 1770 and set in beautiful grounds, retains many period features, making it a perfect venue for

your special celebrations. The Georgian manor has housed Merton's Register Office for more than a quarter of a century.

Morden Leisure Centre

Dive into your new year fitness goals in this modern leisure centre, overlooking Morden Park, which has swimming pools, a gym and classes for all fitness levels.

For the full list of 30 things to do and see in Morden, visit



£30m for Morden town centre



The council's investment will help to create a better town centre that works for local people.

The council has announced plans to commit £30m towards its ambition to regenerate Morden town centre.

This major funding boost, unveiled at the Christmas lights switch-on in Abbotsbury Road, by Council Leader, Councillor Ross Garrod, marks the next step in the council's plans for Remaking Morden, where the council wants to: build new homes that local people have told us they need; develop a vibrant high street with a mix of quality shops; create a thriving evening economy; and make Morden a destination for the benefit of the whole community.

Last September, the council announced that it is seeking a private-sector development partner to help regenerate Morden town centre for residents and businesses, while reflecting its character, spirit and heritage.

The council's vision is to create a more welcoming environment for everyone, with new public spaces, places for children to play, new leisure, arts and culture opportunities, green streets and clean air.

The council has been able to make the £30m investment because it has been careful with taxpayers' money and made choices over recent years to protect its finances. The council also sold a business that it created from scratch, generating a significant sum for the borough.

Find out more merton.gov.uk/remakingmorden



Councillor Ross Garrod, Leader of Merton Council, making the £30m for Morden announcement on 28 November

© Suzanne Mitchell Photography

Doing more for you

Merton Council is good with money. We are in a unique financial position as one of the few local authorities able to offer residents more.

The council has done this by being careful with how it manages its money, smart in how it has brought millions of pounds into the borough, and savvy by generating income from the things the council creates, owns and runs.

Being good with money means that the council can do more for you. There are many services that the council provides that you probably wouldn't have if you lived elsewhere. These are the reasons why looking after our money is about more than numbers on a spreadsheet. It's about more opportunities for everyone, more on offer right across the borough, and more ways to make a difference to the lives of those who most need our support.



More free swimming and more people playing tennis

Becoming the Borough of Sport has made us a magnet for investment, opening the door to sports-related sponsorships and grants.

As part of our Borough of Sport programme, we've introduced free swimming for kids and older people at our three leisure centres. The free sessions run at set times throughout the week, with extra swims available during the school holidays. To date, this has meant over 5,000 hours of free swimming. Check your local leisure centre's timetable and book slots in advance.

Additionally, most of Merton's tennis courts are completely free to book, thanks to money we've put into our courts together with funding from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).



© Matt Grayson

More pop-up tips

Our pop-up tips – allowing residents to dispose of bulky waste items for free in their own neighbourhood – have been expanded so every neighbourhood



has one near them four times a year. Since April, our pop-up tips have been used by more than 10,000 residents to get rid of almost 200 tonnes of rubbish. This has saved residents considerable money, compared with the cost of having items removed in many other boroughs, and has also helped reduce the time and expense involved in dealing with fly-tipped waste.

More free holiday clubs

Merton is one of only three councils nationally to provide Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) clubs during all six school holidays and half terms for children in receipt of free school meals. In 2025, more than 2,800 local children used the clubs.



© Matt Pereira Photography

More summer events

Our festivals and community events go from strength to strength, as others are forced to scale their events back.

Thousands attended last year's We Are Merton festival and the borough's third Big Sports Day.

This year's Start of the Line Festival has just been announced for June to bring communities together and provide good fun for all the family.

More new homes

The council's ambition to build the first new council homes in a generation – giving a safe and secure future to local families – has only been made possible because we secured £20m funding from the Greater London Authority – matching our own investment into the builds.

Investment that will also reduce the council's housing waiting list, as well as to support jobs and the local economy.

More leafy streets

The council is planting 1,000 new street trees across Merton in the areas with the fewest existing trees. This will make our streets greener and more welcoming, and help clean up the air we breathe.

More award-winning parks

Last year, two more council-run parks received a prestigious Green Flag Award – an international quality mark for parks and green spaces. That takes our total to ten in the borough, which is the highest number we've ever had.

More safer streets

The council's new, permanent, Safer Streets Team is patrolling every neighbourhood, every week to tackle anti-social behaviour, street drinking and drug use, enforce the law and issue fines. Although Merton is one of London's safest boroughs, we know that people don't always feel safe, especially after dark, so a key role for the patrols is to provide reassurance for residents.

In the first month alone, the patrols issued fines for littering and unlicensed trading, interrupted drug dealing in a local park, administered first aid and helped people to hospital, and got abandoned vehicles removed.

**Better Services,
Better Value**



MERTON LEGACY FUND



It's time for you to decide which Merton Legacy Fund projects – worth **£3m** – will get the green light.

From Tuesday 20 January, you have the power to help decide how to spend millions of pounds to transform neighbourhoods across Merton.

People from every corner of the borough submitted close to 2,000 suggestions for how we could use £15m from the Merton Legacy Fund – money that we earned by turning a council-owned company into a global success story.

Now, with the help of a group of residents, representing all of our communities, we've shortlisted three lists of projects for you to choose from. The winning list will be funded with the first £3m from the overall pot of £15m. Vote for your favourite projects now.

£3M



HOW CAN I TAKE PART?

You can choose between three lists of proposed projects. Read all about them and cast your vote at

merton.gov.uk/LegacyFund

You have until
3 March to
have your say!



Which option would you fund?

OPTION A:

Supporting you to be out and about in Merton

Cycle lanes Kickstarting a new, ambitious network of routes **B**

St Mark's Place New trees, lighting and seating **Wi**

Bottle refilling stations New stations to keep the borough hydrated **B**

Merton libraries e-books Expanding our collection of titles **B**

Wandle Trail greening Enhancing biodiversity on the well-used walking and cycling route **CW**

Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields upgrades New play equipment, improved paving and more **RP**

Pitt Crescent allotment A new community space to grow produce **Wi**

Playground accessibility Expanding choice for children with disabilities **B**

Benches New seating in our parks **B**

Accessible crossings Making crossing busy roads safer **B**

OPTION B:

Celebrating Merton's heritage and investing for the future

Canons House and Grounds improvements Including new pavilion and woodland improvements **Mi**

Abbey Rec playground equipment Modernisation of the play area **CW Mo Wi**

Town centre pavements Making improvements to benefit businesses and shoppers **B**

Church Lane historic wall repair Saving the Grade II listed wall **Wi**

Booths in libraries New bookable spaces for private meetings **B**

Community Woodland Scheme Woodland planting across up to four hectares **B**

Wimbledon Cemetery railings restoration Restoring the metal railings on Gap Road **Wi**

West Barnes Library The first refurbishment in decades **RP**

Cricket nets Three new sites for community use **Mo Wi**

Shop front improvements Improving the look of shopping parades **B**

OPTION C:

Breathing new life into public spaces

Rain gardens Flood prevention that doubles up as flower gardens **B**

Womble-themed library improvements New stock and play equipment **B**

New street lighting Enhancing visibility and safety **B**

Outdoor gyms in parks Free-to-use outdoor exercise equipment **Mi PH Wi**

Park playground upgrades Improving play opportunities **B**

Morden Park pump track For BMXing, cycling and scooting **Mo**

Morden Park basketball court A space for community sport **Mo**

Community-led park improvements Upgrades suggested by 'friends of' parks groups **B**

£3M



Where has the money come from?

We only have this money because we turned a council company – the Contractors Health and Safety Assessment Scheme (CHAS) – into a global success story, selling it for £186m.

CHAS was a council service offering health and safety advice and accreditation to construction companies. Entrepreneurial thinking led us to offer its services to other councils, and because of the commercial success we set it up as a standalone company in 2013. By 2020, CHAS had become a powerhouse in its field with more than 30,000 clients.

Having built the company from scratch,

we decided to cash in on the hard work and sold CHAS for £186m.

By law, we can't use this money for day-to-day spending on things like bin collections, roads, or social care. Instead, we have strengthened our finances by clearing debts to save millions on interest and making secure investments that will give us a return for years.

We're using the rest of the money for projects that will transform the borough. Some of these – like £30m to regenerate Morden town centre – have already been decided, but we want you to choose how £15m is spent.

Key

CW Colliers Wood

Mi Mitcham

Mo Morden

PH Pollards Hill

RP Raynes Park

Wi Wimbledon

B Borough-wide

£3M



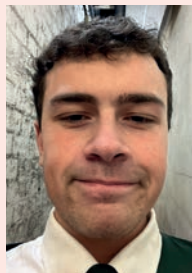
10,000 residents use pop-up tips

A convenient way to dispose of bulky waste in every neighbourhood.

Pop-up tips are part of the council's pledge to make bulky waste disposal easier and reduce fly-tipping. Over the past year, nearly 10,000 residents have made use of 37 pop-up tip events, with every neighbourhood now receiving at least four a year.

These free, local events help residents clear out everything, from broken appliances to out-grown toys, without the need to travel to the borough's main recycling centre in Garth Road, Morden. The process is quick, friendly and designed around making disposal of unwanted items as easy as possible.

Pop-up tips will return in 2026, continuing to support cleaner streets, reduce fly-tipping, and make it easier for everyone to dispose of bulky waste responsibly. Find out more: merton.gov.uk/fourpledges



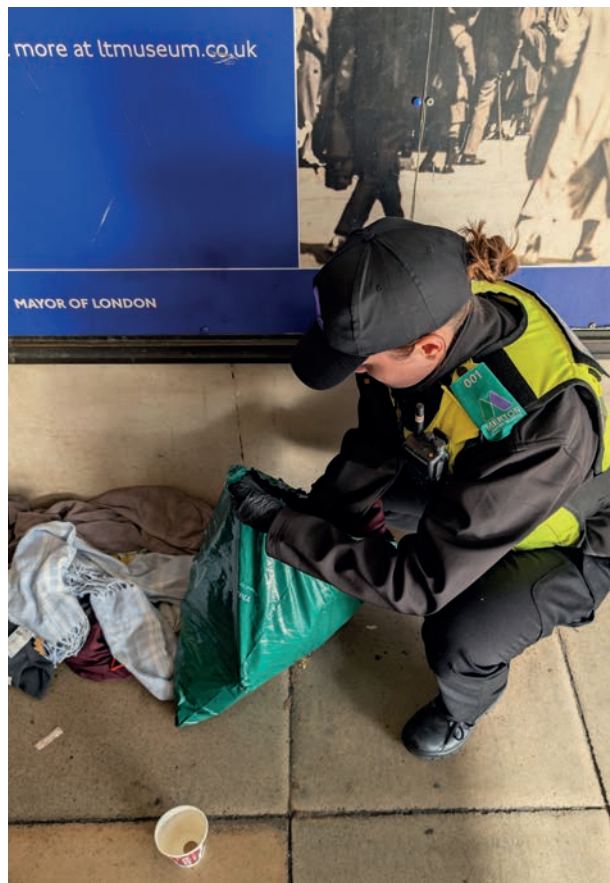
“I brought along an old kettle that I needed to throw out, as well as a load of batteries. I was expecting long queues, but it was so quick and straightforward. The staff were professional and friendly, and I was back home in minutes. It's such a useful service for those of us who aren't close to the main recycling centre.”

Alex, Nursery Road Playing Fields event



“The pop-up tip is perfect for all those things you never quite get around to getting rid of. We had at least four old kids' bikes gathering rust in the garden, plus old paddling pools and broken furniture. I just used my wheelie bin to wheel everything the three minutes round the corner from our house, and the staff were amazing! They even helped unload the heavier items from the bin onto the truck. It made clearing out all that clutter so easy!”

Miso, Swains Road event



“The Safer Streets Team’s regular patrols and visibility have provided reassurance to businesses and their customers, as well as residents, especially during evenings. They’re quick to respond to any concerns, easy to approach, and clearly committed to supporting the local community. It’s had a genuinely positive impact on the atmosphere in the area.”

Craig Hurring,
Chief Executive, Love Wimbledon Business Improvement District

On patrol with the Safer Streets Team

The Safer Streets Team is one of four pledges the council has made to ensure Merton is cleaner, greener and safer.

Merton’s new, permanent Safer Streets Team has been in operation for six months. Although Merton is one of London’s safest boroughs, people don’t always feel safe, especially after dark.

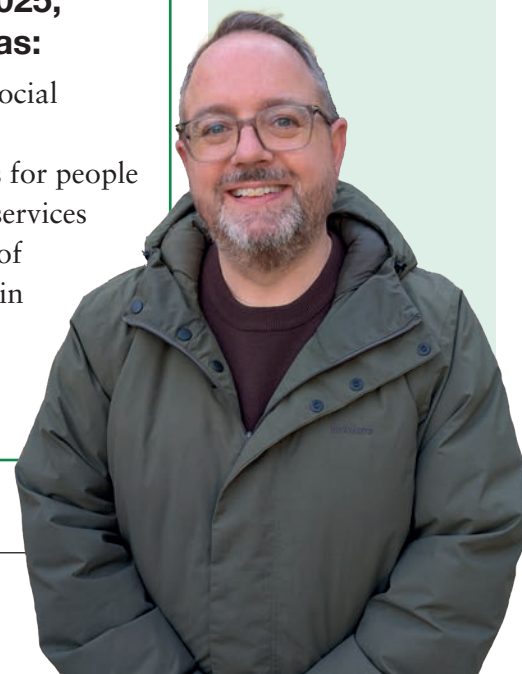
Working alongside the council’s anti-social behaviour, housing, licensing and waste enforcement teams, as well as police and local charities, the Safer Streets Team patrols the borough seven days a week, from early morning into the evening.

Senior Neighbourhood Warden Hayley Downing said: “We have focused on engaging with the community and tackling anti-social behaviour. Our approach is to address anti-social behaviour first through education, followed by enforcement if required. The aim is to help ensure residents always feel safe.”

Since launching, the team has prevented robberies, located major fly-tipping, identified criminal suspects for police, supported harassment victims, and even given lifesaving first aid to a person who was found unconscious in Mitcham town centre.

Since launching in July 2025, the Safer Streets Team has:

- Stopped more than 300 anti-social activities in public places
- Made more than 140 referrals for people into support or safeguarding services
- Seized more than 100 bottles of alcohol from people drinking in public places
- Averaged 600 patrol hours each month



Doubling the number of bike hangars

The council has pledged to make owning a bike easier.



© Jon Moon

“Before using the hangar, I was living in a second-floor flat and I was having to take my bike up the stairs every day.”

Richard Protheroe

Residents told the council that storing a bike – especially in flats and house shares – is a big barrier to getting on two wheels. That’s why we’ve pledged to double the number of bike hangars in locations across the borough, to provide more safe, secure and cheap storage.

Richard Protheroe in Colliers Wood has been using his local bike hangar for six months. He said: “I prefer to cycle over

getting the Tube because it saves about £20 every week. As you can imagine in London, every penny you can save helps and that does add up.

“Before using the hangar, I was living in a second-floor flat and I was having to take my bike up the stairs every day. It was taking up a lot of space in the flat, and grease and mud were getting everywhere. You also hear some horror stories of bikes being stolen, so having this really does give me peace of mind.”

- 56 new hangars being installed
- 336 new spaces in safe and secure storage
- Prices from as little as 14p per day
- Previously installed hangars are 88% full

© Jon Moon



Putting down roots

Arboriculture Manager, John Igglesden, is involved in fulfilling the council's pledge to plant an extra 1,000 street trees across the borough.

What species of tree did you choose for the project?

We selected a mix of species to increase resilience and biodiversity. These include familiar trees like London Plane, Turkish Hazel, European Nettle and Japanese Elm, along with other complementary species.

Why these species?

We chose species that will do well in local conditions, including soil type and hotter, drier summers. In narrow streets, we use column-shaped trees to fit the space. In wider areas, we plant natural-shaped trees to make the area more attractive and support biodiversity.

How were the street tree locations chosen?

We started by looking at where trees have been removed and there are empty tree pits. Each site was then checked by an arboriculturist and a local highways officer to make sure it was suitable. We focused on areas with the fewest trees to help increase canopy cover and make sure all parts of the borough benefit from more greenery.

Why plant trees at this time of year?

Right now, the trees are dormant, which means they're 'sleeping' for the winter. This makes it the best time to plant them, because their roots can start growing into the soil before spring. By planting now, the trees are stronger and ready to grow quickly once the warmer weather arrives.

How can residents help to care for the trees on their street?

We encourage residents to water the trees. Residents can also become tree wardens to support local tree care and monitoring, or join local planting projects via treecouncil.org.uk. Working together helps ensure the trees establish well and thrive.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I've always had a passion for nature, which led me into arboriculture, which is about taking care of trees and shrubs. It's great to see how well-managed green spaces can lift a community.

Now is the best time to plant the trees, because their roots can start growing into the soil before spring.

Report it! Sort it!

Have you got an issue in your neighbourhood?



Had a missed bin collection?



Seen graffiti or a broken bench?



Got an abandoned vehicle on your street?



Spotted a fly-tip?

Visit merton.gov.uk/reportsort or call 020 8274 4901 (choose option 6) to report it - and we'll sort it.



Making Merton cleaner, greener and safer

 LONDON BOROUGH OF
MERTON

Cleaning up the streets

The council's street cleaning team has achieved a high clear-up rate since the service was given a fresh start.



Street sweeping services were brought back under the council's direct management in response to residents, who told us that they wanted to see cleaner streets. Since April last year, every street in the borough is swept at least once a week. Town centres are cleaned more frequently.

The council's in-house street sweeping team proactively looks for and removes fly-tips, as well as responding to reports of fly-tipping from residents. This has resulted in a ten per cent reduction in the number of fly-tips being reported – down from 8,410 between April and November 2024, to 7,603 during the same period last year. The team has a 100 per cent clear-up rate for all reported fly-tips and street cleaning issues.

“Our street cleaner, Richmond, does a brilliant job cleaning the pavements in Wimbledon Park. I know I am not the only resident who is grateful! He always smiles, makes space for all the school children and is also careful around the tree pits that Merton Garden Street volunteers have planted full of pollinator-friendly plants.”

Hanna Dunnell, resident and Merton Garden Streets and Community Growing Project Manager



Get moving around our Borough of Sport

Becoming more active is one of the most popular new year resolutions. If you've resolved to exercise more in 2026, here are some ideas on how to get moving.

Browse hundreds of activities available on your doorstep in Merton, including free and low-cost options, on our Activity Finder.



© Suzanne Mitchell Photography

Merton is on a mission to become London's first ever Borough of Sport, and the council has supported more than 45 ways to get active and projects since 2023.

Borough of Sport is about helping everyone in the borough, no matter their background, ability or age, to enjoy being active close to home.

Here are five great options for people who want to start moving more this year.

Morden parkrun

A free 5km event in Morden Park, which you walk, jog or run. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, making it ideal for complete beginners or anyone returning to exercise.

Saturdays, Morden Park, 9am. Free.

Beginners Bootcamp – Our Parks

This gentle Saturday-morning session in Mitcham focuses on simple, low-intensity movements. Instructors offer easier alternatives throughout, allowing participants to build strength at their own pace. Stick around for Mitcham Market afterwards, which is just across the road.

Saturdays, Mitcham Fair Green, 10am. Free.

Walking Netball

A slower, low-impact version of netball, designed for people who want a slower-paced game. Participants walk rather than run, creating a sociable, enjoyable environment suitable for all fitness levels.

Thursdays, Canons Leisure Centre, 11am. Free.



© Matt Grayson



Evening yoga at South Mitcham Community Association

Created with beginners in mind, these classes help to improve balance, strength and overall wellbeing. Unwind and shake off the stresses of your day with a relaxing session full of stretches and mindful movement.

Tuesdays, South Mitcham Community Association, 6.30pm. £4.

Free library fitness classes

Merton libraries offer dozens of classes each week across their sites, all accessible and adaptable for exercise newbies. From yoga and circuits, through to fitness sessions designed for over 60s, these free classes are run by Better Leisure and Nuffield Health. Reserve your place online.

Merton libraries. Free.



© So/Stock | iStock.com



© Matt Pereira Photography



More places to play

New sports hall at Morden Leisure Centre leads big boost for playing pitches across the borough.

The council is creating a major plan to give residents more places to play and enjoy sport, including a new multi-million pound four-court sports hall at Morden Leisure Centre.

Sport England's latest data shows the borough is becoming more active, with 6,800 more adults now active than in 2022 and children's sport growing rapidly, especially among girls. These new and improved facilities will help ensure Merton has enough high-quality spaces to meet the needs of its growing sporting community.

What is already happening

Playground and paddling pool upgrades

Various locations. We're investing £1.75m over five years to upgrade playgrounds and paddling pools, creating safer and more enjoyable spaces for children. Works at many sites are already complete, including improvements to multi-use games and sports areas. More upgrades are planned by 2027, shaped by safety inspections and community feedback.

Tennis court makeovers

Various locations. 47 courts across the borough were refurbished in 2024, thanks to support from the council, the Government and the Lawn Tennis Association.

Pavilion upgrades

Pavilion at Canons House and Grounds and the pavilion at King George's Playing Fields in Morden.

Improvements to the kitchen and changing facilities are completed, and are now available for local groups to use.

Cricket pitch upgrades

Morden Park, Morden Recreation Ground, Dundonald Recreation Ground in Wimbledon, King George's Playing Fields in Morden, Joseph Hood Recreation Ground in Morden and Haydons Road Recreation Ground in Wimbledon.

Work is being undertaken to bring six basic pitches up to a high standard for the 2026 season. With council support, Mitcham Cricket Club has also secured funding for a new artificial grass pitch.



Did you know?

There are 27 Equip boxes at courts and pitches across the borough. Equip boxes allow you to rent sports equipment for free, or at low-cost. Find your nearest box: equip.sport



What's coming next

A brand-new sports hall

Morden Leisure Centre. The council has announced plans for a brand-new, four-court sports hall at Morden Leisure Centre. The centre already welcomes more than half a million visitors a year, and this multi-million pound addition will open the doors to even more activities: from basketball and gymnastics to badminton and netball.

The project also includes more changing facilities. Watch this space for more updates.

Full-size artificial grass pitch

Sir Joseph Hood Memorial Playing Fields in Motspur Park. A brand new full-size artificial grass pitch is planned, which will create a much-needed year-round football facility. Installation is planned for 2026, subject to planning permission.

Four new multi-use games areas

Joseph Hood Recreation Ground in Morden, The Sherwood School in Mitcham, Pollards Hill Youth Club and Pollards Hill Recreation Ground.

From this spring, multi-use games areas will be installed for the community to use and for clubs to play sports including football, cricket and basketball.



SHOW UP FOR MERTON

There's a membership to match your lifestyle and goals, helping you move more, save more, and feel good every day.

better.org.uk/merton



Kitting out young athletes

Sponsor announced for Merton's London Youth Games team.

Better Leisure has become the sponsor of Merton's London Youth Games team and provided brand-new kit for participants to wear at events.

Better Leisure, the organisation that runs Merton's three leisure centres in Morden, Wimbledon and The Canons, Mitcham, was named as sponsor of the team following outreach to organisations across the borough and a competitive selection process.

The London Youth Games is Europe's largest youth sports tournament, bringing together young athletes from all 33 London local authorities to compete in 32 sports and inclusive games throughout the year.

The games are a big part of Merton's journey to becoming London's first ever Borough of Sport, with more than 300 young people taking part each year. The competition encourages young

people to try new activities and develop their skills, whilst representing their home borough.

Under the guidance of Sean McInnes Sports Coaching, the organisation that oversees Team Merton on behalf of the council, the borough's young athletes are going from strength to strength. In 2025, Merton climbed from near the bottom of the rankings to a top ten finish, after winning the Most Improved Borough accolade in 2023.

Founder and Chief Executive Sean McInnes said: "The London Youth Games offers something for everyone, giving young people the chance to be part of something special. Competing against the best young athletes in London is a fantastic achievement and often the moment that inspires a lifelong love of sport and physical activity."

Find out more: merton.gov.uk/youthgames



Theo Creed from Wimbledon, was the winner of the Under 15 London Youth Games, Boys' Cross Country, representing the team in his brand-new hoodie.

He said: "Big shout out to Better, our sponsors. I felt amazing throughout the race – I went from the first hill and then just held by lead."

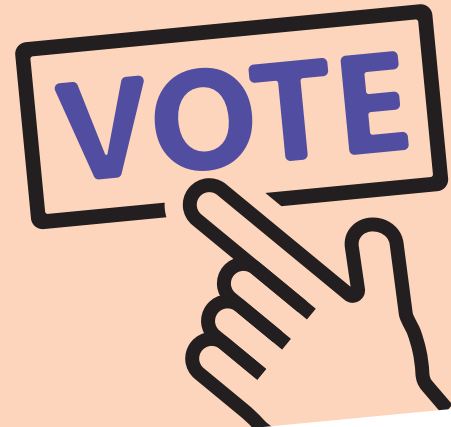


Are you registered to vote at your current address?

Register to vote by 20 April

- **Postal** vote applications must be received by 5pm on 21 April
- **Proxy** vote applications must be received by 5pm on 28 April

Elections for every seat on Merton Council will be held on Thursday 7 May.



merton.gov.uk/voting



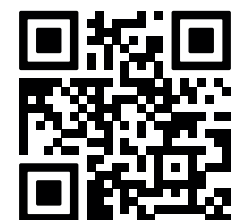
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Community gymnastics gives Ida a new lease of life

A free weekly gymnastics class helped 85-year-old Ida walk away from her zimmer frame.

“When I was younger it was easy to keep active,” says Ida Wood, 85, from Colliers Wood. “But in my 50s, I developed a curvature in my spine called scoliosis, which over the years, has made it much harder to move around, let alone exercise.”

Although she’s now an enthusiastic regular at Wimbledon Gymnastics Centre’s specialist Seniors’ Gym-Fit class, Ida discovered the session by chance. She says: “Val, who runs the class, introduced herself to my friends and me while we were having coffee nearby. When she mentioned the class I thought, ‘Why not?’”

Even after one visit, gymnastics teacher Val Hoppichler, founder of Wimbledon Gymnastics Centre in Merton Abbey Mills, noticed a change. “After the first session of gentle stretches and movement, we were able to raise the height of Ida’s walker – she was already walking more upright!” Now, after a year of attending every Thursday morning, Ida barely uses her walker.

“At the start I really thought I couldn’t do it, but I feel so much better after every session,” Ida says, as she chalks her hands to swing from the high bar. “Before these classes I wasn’t even able to sit down on the floor and stand up again.”



Functional movements are just as impressive as landing a backflip from teacher Val’s perspective. “We designed these free classes to help older people with balance and strength, to prevent falls and helping people stay independent,” she says. “We work with all levels of mobility and skill, and I’ve seen huge benefits to people’s confidence, as well as to their physical health.”

For Ida, the class is a social activity as much as a chance to get active, and she urges others to give it a try.

She says: “Come along and see what we do here. Have a go. Sometimes you need someone to convince you; I’m always telling the others to make sure they keep Thursdays free. It’s one of those things you need to put in the diary and stick to – it gets easier once you start to feel the benefits, like I have.”

Discover how you can move your way in 2026:
merton.gov.uk/boroughofsport



“Before these classes I wasn’t even able to sit down on the floor and stand up again.”

Breaking ground on new council homes

The council broke ground on the first new council homes to be built in Merton in a generation with an event at the first construction site at Farm Road, Morden.

Residents and businesses have told the council that genuinely affordable housing is one of their biggest priorities, to help them, their families and employees to continue living and working in the borough.

By 2027, the council will complete 75 new council homes at three locations in phase one of development, starting with Farm Road, Morden, followed by Elm Nursery and Raleigh Gardens, in Mitcham. The new homes are in existing communities, close to nearby shops and services, and are set to provide a boost to local businesses.

The 18 new homes in Farm Road will be a mixture of one and two-bedroom flats, plus larger houses for families. Residents will save money on their utility bills, thanks to an energy-efficient design that will keep the new homes insulated and warm.

The council plans to build more council homes in the future, managing them directly for the benefit of our borough's residents. These developments are supported with a multi-million pound investment from the Mayor of London's Affordable Homes programme.



Council Leader, Councillor Ross Garrod and Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainable Development, Councillor Andrew Judge, were joined by the Deputy Mayor of London for Housing and Residential Development, Tom Copley, at the event



All images © Suzanne Mitchell Photography



Faces of Merton photography project

The hoardings around the Farm Road construction site of our new council homes feature people connected to Merton.

The Faces of Merton photography project captured the rich diversity of people who live, work, study and volunteer in Merton.

The striking images encourage passers-by to stop and find out more about Merton's new council homes programme.

In total, 32 individuals and four families were photographed, each with their own story and connection to Merton, including a group of volunteers who rejuvenated the garden at Vestry Hall, a Merton College student and residents who have lived in the borough for decades.

Sophia Doran features on the hoardings with her husband Dan, daughter Ava and their cat Mia. She said: "We loved being involved in such a special project.

"Seeing our photo and all the others on the hoardings was an amazing feeling. It was wonderful to share this experience with other members of the community.

"It's great that the council will be building affordable housing, and I'm looking forward to seeing other unused sites across the borough refreshed with new homes."

Ava, aged six, added: "It was nice to see my family on a big poster, and I loved seeing our cat, Mia."

Looking forward to 2026

Get excited for another year of fun, culture and sport in Merton.

From summer fun to magical winter spectaculars, 2026 is jam-packed full of things to do, see and experience in Merton.

'To Boldly Go' at the Royal Albert Hall Spring, Tuesday 10 March

This world-famous concert hall will be filled with the sound of over 1,500 young musicians from Merton schools and Merton Music Foundation Music Centres. The theme of this year's concert is 'To Boldly Go', featuring a specially commissioned suite of music. Book your seats to celebrate our talented youngsters in one of London's most iconic venues.

Add your events for 2026 to our free online events calendar

merton.gov.uk/events



© Rebecca Cresta Photography

Start of The Line Festival Summer, Saturday 20 June

Start of the Line is a brand-new council-produced music, arts and culture festival coming to Morden Park in June 2026. The full line-up will be revealed soon. Already confirmed are Mitcham rap legend Ramz and the children's Polka Theatre. Start of the Line is part of our We Are Merton cultural programme.

It is made possible by funding from the Mayor of London.

Tickets are already on sale via merton.gov.uk/startoftheline for £20 and under-12s free.

Mitcham Carnival Summer

The Mitcham Carnival will be bigger and better than ever, with a full family day of entertainment, sounds and flavours all in one place at Three Kings Piece.



© Matt Pereira Photography



© Rebecca Cresta Photography



© Matt Pereira Photography



© Suzanne Mitchell Photography

Mitcham Bandstand Summer

The bandstand will stage a second season of performances on Mitcham Fair Green. A packed programme is planned for local talent to take centre stage in the heart of the community.

Big Screens Summer and onwards

Watch a game, set or match on a big screen during the Wimbledon tennis fortnight. The screens will be switched on in our parks throughout the summer sports season, so you can catch some of your favourite events. Watch this space for the programme to be confirmed.

Library in the Park Summer

Merton libraries will be on the road this summer, bringing events and activities to Morden Park and Canons House and Grounds in Mitcham. From performances for children through to arts and crafts for everyone, this free series of events is part of our We Are Merton cultural programme, funded by the Mayor of London, which aims to bring cultural activity to every corner of Merton.

Merton Pride Autumn, Saturday 5 September

After its historic inaugural year, Merton Pride will return

in September. Join the Pride March and then explore the community stalls and get involved in the celebrations, including lots of dancing at Merton Abbey Mills.

Wimbledon BookFest Autumn, 15–25 October

Bookmark this popular literary festival, which has a diverse line up of bestselling authors, who take part in conversations on stage and book signings. Alongside the fortnight of paid-for ticketed events, Wimbledon BookFest also partners with Merton libraries across the year, through initiatives including the Merton Big Read.

Fireworks in the Park Winter, November

Remember, remember to buy your discounted early-bird tickets to one of London's biggest fireworks displays. Merton is one of the few boroughs which still puts on spectacular shows in Morden Park and Wimbledon Park, which draw huge crowds from across the borough and beyond.

Sign up to receive our What's On in Merton e-newsletter for a weekly roundup of exciting events, and exclusive reader offers. merton.gov.uk/newsletter



Do you look after a family member, friend or neighbour or know someone who does?

Did you know that there is a range of support available for you?



Putting our shops on parade



As part of ongoing work to improve Merton’s town centres, the council’s restoration programme is helping to transform shopping parades across the borough.

Using money from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the council has worked with businesses since 2021 to redesign and upgrade their shop fronts to encourage new customers to visit.

While each renovated shop has an individual design, they look consistent with others along the parade.

The latest renovations were on Northborough Road in Pollards Hill, where the council has put in new signs, lighting and improved shop fronts, including adding feature tiling and awnings.

Arulanantham Gnaneswaran from Northborough Corner convenience shop said: “My shop signage now has a nice beach-style look. It looks really good.

“All the shops on the parade have a similar style and pattern of signage which is attractive. The council has also put lights up along the roofs, which look really beautiful at night.

“I’ve had compliments from customers, they ask ‘Who did this?’, and I’ve said, ‘Merton Council!’.

“There is now less rubbish along the parade with a new bin outside. People used to throw things everywhere on the street out the front, but there is less of that now.”



Northborough Corner’s transformation from below to left



“The new energy-efficient windows are remarkable. Our house feels warmer, quieter, and safer. We no longer need to worry about waking up cold.”

David, Merton



Making homes more energy efficient

David and his wife, Athena, have lived in their traditional London brick semi-detached home for 15 years. However, in recent times, their home, in South Wimbledon, had become increasingly hard to keep warm.

The seals on their double-glazed windows had popped, meaning they no longer worked properly. Cold air came in through the window frames, and damp and condensation were clearly visible on winter mornings. Despite the heating being on, both David and Athena would wake up shivering. For a couple aged in their 80s, living in a cold and damp home affected their health and wellbeing.

With support from Lendology and Merton Council, they were able to access finance to replace their windows with energy-efficient double-glazed sash windows.

The new windows keep the original look of their home while reducing draughts, damp, and heat loss, making the property noticeably warmer and more comfortable to live.

David said: “The new energy-efficient windows are remarkable. Our house feels warmer, quieter, and safer. We no longer need to worry about waking up cold.”

Support for Merton residents

Merton Council is the only London borough offering this kind of home improvement finance, in partnership with Lendology, helping residents make their homes warmer, safer and more energy efficient. To find out what support may be available to you, visit www.lendology.org.uk/partner/london-borough-of-merton or scan the QR code.



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

merton.bluebadge@necsws.com

020 3324 1877 (weekdays 9am–5pm)

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 (Weekdays 10am–3pm, except Tuesdays 8am–5pm)

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

Electoral services

merton.gov.uk/voting

020 8545 3407

Fostering

merton.gov.uk/fostering

fostering@merton.gov.uk

0800 073 0874

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 (Daily 8am–8pm)

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

Sports, parks, libraries, events.

merton.gov.uk/leisure

leisure@merton.gov.uk

Licensing

licensing@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3969

Noise and anti-social behaviour

merton.gov.uk/noise-nuisance

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

For weddings, civil ceremonies or partnerships; to register a birth or death; name a baby or citizenship ceremonies.

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

Snow and ice

merton.gov.uk/wintermaintenance

trafficandhighways@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3700 (10am–4pm)

Street cleaning and graffiti

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

trading.standards@merton.gov.uk

020 8545 3025 (9am–5pm)

£30M for MORDEN DEN

Merton Council is committing £30m towards the regeneration of Morden

We're creating a better town centre that works for local people, by:

- building new homes
- developing a vibrant high street
- creating a thriving evening economy
- building a destination for the benefit of the community



REMAKING MORDEN



Find out more:
[merton.gov.uk/
remakingmorden](https://merton.gov.uk/remakingmorden)