

new and information from your council

my merton

LONDON 2012 GAMES

The countdown begins

SETTING THE BUDGET

Work begins on balancing
the budget for
2012-2013



Beating Bullying

JLS singer visits Merton
to offer anti-bullying advice

Be informed, get involved

Back in October Merton Council celebrated Local Democracy Week with over 150 young people taking part in events aimed at promoting democratic participation at a local level.

Apart from annual events such as this there are a number of ways to keep informed on the latest issues or get involved with your local council.

My Merton has highlighted just a few ideas below but get the full list online at www.merton.gov.uk/getinvolved

Online

Are you a social media fan? Get news from the council as it happens via Facebook and Twitter. You can now also enter *My Merton* competitions via our social media channels too.

- Follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/mertoncouncil
- And Twitter @Merton_Council

The council's website is also full of useful information and ways for you to get involved or report problems.

You can look at and sign petitions online, find out about public meetings or get the most up to date information on key issues, for example the budget. As featured on pages 10 and 11, information about the budget process will be regularly updated online.

www.merton.gov.uk/budget

You can also easily report concerns about your area online via www.merton.gov.uk/report-it

Face to face

Merton is divided up into wards and for each ward there are three local councillors representing your needs. Your ward councillor can help you with any difficulties you are experiencing with local services. Why not find out who your local councillor is at www.merton.gov.uk/councillors

Whether you attend the annual community forums, come along to one of the public cabinet meetings, full council or get involved with the scrutiny process you can get involved in the decisions that influence your community at whichever level suits you.

Find out more
www.merton.gov.uk/getinvolved
or call
020 8545 3896



The Leader of Merton Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis, writes for *My Merton*.

Recently I grew a moustache which I am shaving off for charity. The growth on my upper lip was not appreciated by my wife but not me thinking about growth in general. It's easy to feel down at this time of year as the trees lose their leaves and shrubs die back. The new growth of spring seems a long way off.

Similarly, with the cuts the council must make, we could be tempted to give up on things ever getting better. However, I believe that if we can protect the roots we can ensure Merton's re-flowering again in the future.

I meet Merton residents every day and they tell me they understand the difficult position the council is in. They've read about the cuts to local government funding in the papers or heard it on their TV or radio. They understand that we are being forced into making some hard choices in Merton. However, they also want us to protect as much as we can.

The problem is, with £44m cuts required over the next three years, we won't be able to protect everything. We need to decide what our priorities will be and the roots we need to protect.

We will continue to provide services that the law requires us to. We believe we should also protect services to the most vulnerable children and older people. Next, we will keep Merton a clean and affordable borough. For many people street cleaning and refuse collection may be the only council services they use.

There are some things we won't do. We won't close libraries, parks, kids' paddling pools, leisure centres or children's centres. However, everything else has to be up for discussion.

By law we need to agree a balanced budget by 10 March and this will mean some very difficult decisions. I will not hide from making these decisions. That is because at the end of all of this I, like you, want to have a council that helps keep Merton a great place to live and raise a family. I believe that the approach we are taking to the budget, prioritising statutory services, protecting the most vulnerable and keeping our streets clean, will ensure Merton will come through this hard time to grow and thrive again in the future. 🌱

Stephen Alambritis

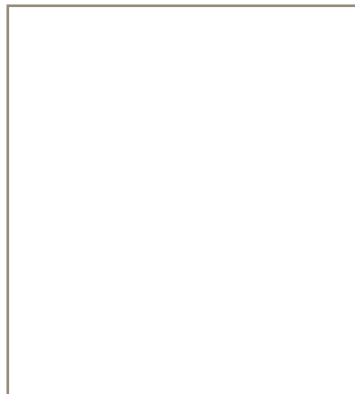
P.S. See page 9 for some green shoots of growth already happening in Merton at the new Joseph Hood school building.

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Ready, set, go!

Countdown
to the London
2012 Olympic
and Paralympic
Games



**My Merton cost only
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When you have finished with
this magazine please recycle it.

My Merton is printed on fully recyclable paper,
which is accredited by the PEFC Council
(Programme for the Endorsement of Forest
Certification schemes).

Debra the Zebra triumphs at AFC Wimbledon Mascot race

At this year's AFC Wimbledon mascot obstacle race, the council's very own road safety mascot, Debra the Zebra, who visits schools to teach children about road safety, stormed home beating all the other mascots to the finishing line.

The race was hosted by AFC Wimbledon's mascot Haydon the Womble and other runners included Children in Need's Pudsey Bear, Howe the Hound from Horsham FC and Roary the Tiger from Surrey Heath Recycling Centre.

Organised by the Wimbledon Common Runners, the event took place on Wimbledon Common and raised money for the charity Hounds for Heroes.



Winter Wonderland

Feelin' festive? Why not celebrate the festive season with the annual Winter Wonderland celebration in and around Wimbledon Town Centre on Thursday 24 November. With a parade, fireworks, Christmas markets and much more, the event runs from 5pm - 8pm and has something for all the family.

✂ **find out more**

www.wimbledontowncentre.co.uk



Merton young achievers celebrated

Merton honoured its outstanding young achievers with a ceremony at the civic centre in September.

The event marked another successful year for GCSE and A' Level results in the borough where results bettered the national average for five GCSE

passes including English and Maths for the first time.

At the reception, Merton's young people were praised for their hard work during their exams, particularly those who had made significant progress over the past academic year.



Green fingered community groups, local residents and businesses celebrated success as the Merton in Bloom results were announced this autumn. The Windmill pub in Mitcham was named best blooming pub while The Priory C of E Primary School was declared the winner of the school wildlife competition. Other notable achievements included Baitul Futuh Mosque's best hanging basket and the best community garden went to Mitcham Parish Church.

Merton also scored points within the London-wide competition with The Paddock Allotments in Wimbledon judged to be the best allotment site in London for the second year running. Other achievements in the borough included a Silver Gilt award for South Park Gardens, who are already celebrating their recent Green Flag success and Wimbledon Common which was voted the second best common in London.

Partnership working in action

Strong partnership work in Merton has resulted in a 15-bed property for young people with learning disabilities.

Grenfell Housing & Training was able to take advantage of a grant of over £400,000 from The Department of Health to refurbish a building in Mitcham. With the support of Merton Council, professional builders and architects, the property has been transformed into a suitable and accessible home for disabled adults. The first four residents moved in at the end of the summer.

✂ **find out more**

www.merton.gov.uk/partnerships

Merton's Budget process update

Merton councillors are currently in the process of finalising a four year business plan and a list of saving options in order to balance the council's budget for the next few years.

In October, all Merton councillors received a full list of budget options which were prepared by officers. Councillors are now reviewing these officer options and deciding which to include in final plans to help the council save the £4.2 million it needs over the next three years.

The options being considered range from changing the way services are delivered, getting better deals on contracts as well as reducing and making back office functions more efficient.

✂ **find out more**

Check out the budget feature on pages 10 and 11 or online at
www.merton.gov.uk/budget



Pop star joins fight to beat bullying



Pupils from Bishopsford School were treated to a surprise visit from a member of UK chart-topping group JLS at the end of September.

JLS singer Aston Merrygold, centre of photo in white t-shirt, ambassador for charity Beat Bullying, spoke to students about cyberbullying to raise awareness of and help stop harassment on the internet and mobile phones. The singer, who reached the final of television show the X Factor, shared his story of being bullied and advised young people of the ways to seek help if they find themselves in the same situation.

✂ **find out more**
www.beatbullying.org

Merton celebrates LGBT History Month 2012

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) History Month takes place every February in the UK and celebrates the lives and achievements of the LGBT community. Events planned for the month so far in Merton include a celebration party, film screenings, a special book club and an exhibition on Merton's forgotten LGBT past.

If you are interested in helping with Merton's LGBT History Month celebrations, come along to the next LGBT forum meeting on 4 January, 6pm-7pm at the Mansel Road Centre, Wimbledon.

✂ **find out more**
www.merton.gov.uk/lgbt

School application deadline

The deadline for applying to school nurseries and primary schools is fast approaching.

Applications are now open for children born between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2010 whose parents would like a place in a Merton primary school nursery class and for children born between 1 September 2007 and 31 August 2008 who are due to start reception class from September 2012.

Applications can be completed online. The deadline is 15 January 2012.

✂ **find out more**
www.merton.gov.uk/admissions



Don't miss the bus on school admissions

Merton Business Awards 2011

The 2011 Merton Business Awards took place at the All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon back in September. Merton Council, South London Business and Merton Chamber of Commerce developed the concept together in order to reward and celebrate the many dynamic and innovative businesses in the borough.

The winner of the 2011 business of the year

went to structural and civil engineers Elliott Wood Partnership LLP. Other winners included Wimbledon based Samuel Estates who received a highly commended award and The Vine Project in Mitcham who picked up a commended award.

✂ **find out more**

For a full list of results visit:

www.mertonbusinessawards.co.uk/2011-winners

New improved library service

Merton Libraries will be joining the London Libraries Consortium (LLC) in December. This will mean library users will have access to over 10 million items of stock and can renew books, DVDs and records via the 24 hour telephone service. In order for the changes to take place there will be limited access to the library catalogue between Saturday 3 December and Friday 9 December. All libraries will remain open during this time.

🔗 **find out more**

www.merton.gov.uk/libraries

Young readers rewarded

This year's Circular Star themed Summer Reading Challenge was a record breaker with 2,944 children aged four to 11 taking part in Merton's annual library event. This is the highest number of children ever to participate in the Summer Reading Challenge and means that a huge number of Merton's school children are developing their reading through the fun project. Fourteen lucky winners including Isabelle Hayes pictured, met Mayor of Merton, Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender, to collect their prizes.

🔗 **find out more**

www.merton.gov.uk/libraries

Champion pilot at Pollards Hill

Merton Libraries Volunteer Champion programme is now in full swing with volunteers delivering a range of activities from family dance classes to basic skills assessments at Pollards Hill Library.

The library has benefited hugely from Big Lottery funding, enabling its volunteers to provide residents with additional activities and events such as health, skills for life, family learning and community events.

"Being a health champion has given me confidence, has informed my professional knowledge and added credit to my CV for future work."

Sarah, health champion.

If you are interested in seeing how you could volunteer your time for the community, call the team.

🔗 **find out more**

020 8274 5741.

Inspectors from Ofsted, the official body for inspecting schools, have visited four of Merton's children's centres to inspect the services they provide for children and young people in the borough.

During the inspection the Ofsted inspectors spent two days in the children's centres, meeting with staff, health, social care and voluntary sector partners, children and parents and carers to see for themselves the kind of services Merton is providing.

Following these visits, Abbey Children's Centre in South Wimbledon, The Avenue Children's Centre in Wimbledon,

Newminster Children's Centre in Morden and Lavender Children's Centre, London Road Site, in Mitcham have all been graded, 'Good', with some centres having 'Outstanding' features. Thank you to all staff and families who took part in the inspections.

🔗 **find out more**

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Wandle Valley Low Carbon Zone

The Wandle Valley Low Carbon Zone has been working closely with schools within the zone to increase carbon (CO2) savings. There have been many green initiatives introduced since the zone was set up.

Examples of carbon saving measures include installing energy efficient lighting, insulation, and heating. Automatic readers have been put in place so schools can monitor how much energy they are using. Solar panels have also been installed in Haselemere, Benedict and Lonsome primary schools in the Low Carbon Zone, providing a source of renewable energy generation.

Merton estimates that the combined work in the Low Carbon Zone will save over 100 tonnes of CO2 per year leading to energy savings of more than £20,000.



Looking for childcare?

If you are looking for childcare and learning opportunities for your child, you could now get what you need at Merton's children's centre preschools.

Three of Merton's children's centres now have preschools on site. Lavender Children's Centre on London Road, Lavender Children's Centre, Steers Mead and The Children's Centre at St Mark's can all provide Ofsted-registered, quality early year preschool childcare for your children aged between two and four during the morning from Monday to Friday.

✦ **find out more**

Email fsd@merton.gov.uk or call 020 8545 3800 for more information and introductory offers. Alternatively pop in to the children's centre for a visit and information pack.

Mayor recognises bravery of public servants during riots

Mayor of Merton Councillor Gill Lewis-Lavender has formally recognised the bravery and dedication of the borough's police officers, the London Fire Brigade's Mitcham Red Watch and a number of council staff who helped keep Merton safe during the August riots.

At the full council meeting in September, the Mayor presented an award to the Metropolitan Police which was collected by Inspector Stuart Buchan, duty officer at the time of the riots in Colliers Wood, and Sergeant Gary Martin who co-ordinated the borough's response to the civil unrest. The Mayor also presented an award to London

Fire Brigade's Mitcham Red Watch manager David Simpson.

Certificates were awarded to council staff who helped with the police response, working around the clock monitoring CCTV, organising council vehicles and driving police officers to trouble hot spots at a moment's notice.



Council officers are thanked by the Mayor of Merton

Get help with the Digital Switchover



The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC to help older and disabled people make the change to digital TV. If you are 75 and over or registered disabled you will be entitled to the help on offer. You will be asked to pay £40 towards the Switchover Help Scheme which includes easy to use equipment, an approved installer to supply and install the necessary equipment, and a 12 month aftercare service including a free helpline.

This service is available free of charge for those receiving certain income-related benefits.

✦ **find out more**

Call free on 0800 40 85 900 or visit www.helpscheme.co.uk

Win tickets to see Dick Whittington

Win one of FIVE family tickets to see Dick Whittington at New Wimbledon Theatre this Christmas.

You can now enter on Twitter and Facebook

Dame Julia Everage will be starring as the Saviour of London in this year's family pantomime spectacular Dick Whittington. Actor, Sam Attwater and television presenter Anna Williamson will also join her.

Featuring sensational songs, dazzling dance routines, slapstick comedy and lots of audience participation, Dick Whittington is guaranteed to be fun for all the family.

New Wimbledon Theatre has once again teamed up with My Merton magazine and is offering the chance to win one of five family tickets to see the show on its opening weekend starting Friday 9 December 2011. Each winning family will also receive a pantomime programme.

What sort of animal is Dick Whittington's companion Tommy?

a) Dog b) Cat c) Turtle

Just 'like' the Merton Council Facebook page and follow the simple online instructions to enter the competition or tweet your answer to @Merton_Council on Twitter.

You can also email the answer with your name and telephone number to communications@merton.gov.uk or write to us at My Merton, 9th floor, Civic Centre, London Road Morden SM4 5DX

The closing date is Wednesday 30 November 2011.

Dick Whittington is onstage from Friday 9 December 2011 until Sunday 15 January 2012. To book tickets, please call the Box Office on 0844 8717 646.

Conditions: The tickets (each family ticket is for 4 people) are only valid for the following performances: Friday 9 Dec at 7pm, Sat 10 Dec 2pm & 7pm and Sun 11 Dec 1.30pm & 5.30pm only. Tickets and the programme can be collected on the night from the Box Office. They cannot be exchanged/transferred to another performance or production and there is no cash alternative.

Tim for the magic to begin

Visit Santa in his Rainbow Star Workshop

Santa's Grotto opening times

20 Nov - 11 Dec 2011
12pm - 4pm

12 Dec - 14 Dec 2011
11am - 5pm

To see Santa and receive a gift £2.50

6 x 4 photo £3.50

2 x (6 x 4) photos £6.00

All proceeds go to the Centre's nominated charity
Volunteer Centre, Merton

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Carrying on the good work, educating Merton

Merton Council is continuing its substantial schools' expansion programme as it works to achieve its vision to educate every child in the borough within walking distance from home.

This issue of *My Merton* focuses on the permanent expansion of Joseph Hood primary school. Once complete, the new buildings will enable the school to meet the growing number of children in the catchment area needing school places. In addition to new classrooms, the £6 million scheme includes general improvements to the school and a brand new hall.

The school is all set to have a permanent two-form intake from September 2012, increasing the number of pupils from 210 to 420. The council has worked with its adult education team at the neighbouring Merton Adult Education college to ensure there is sufficient room for Joseph Hood's expansion.

The past six years have seen a 39% increase in the birth rate, fuelling unprecedented demand for school places in Merton. The Joseph Hood expansion is part of the plan to accommodate this demand, with the first phase of the expansion completed for the start of term this September. The second phase is now under construction and the building is scheduled to be completed ready for September 2012. Joseph Hood pupils are eager for the work to finish so they can use their new school hall and classrooms.

Year 2 pupil Katie Wildgoose said "I'm really excited about the new school buildings. Our new classroom is already up and it's so light with lots of space for everyone."

Joseph Hood head teacher Anita Saville enthused: "We love our new school buildings. I'm looking forward to seeing the completion of the works so that we can comfortably accommodate all the children for whom we are required to provide a local education. The new buildings will undoubtedly improve the school and allow us to teach our children

“I'm really excited about the new school buildings. Our new classroom is already up and it's so light with lots of space for everyone”
Year 2 pupil Katie Wildgoose



39%
Increase
in child birth
rate over
the past
six years.

in a 21st century learning environment."

The council's cabinet member for education, Councillor Peter Walker said: "To see the first building become a reality is incredibly encouraging. We are committed to providing a first class education to all our pupils, and our major investment in primary schools will ensure that we are able to give our children the best start possible. Looking to the longer term future, we're keen to also make major investment in our secondary schools."

Joseph Hood head teacher, Anita Saville and Councillor Peter Walker celebrate the new building with Year 2 pupils.

Budgeting for Merton

Most of the council's money, which is spent on services such as waste collection, libraries, parks and day centres for older people, comes from central Government funding. As announced back in 2010, the Government is reducing this funding by more than a quarter over the next few years. *My Merton* finds out how the council is dealing with this challenging financial situation.

Background

Less than 18% of the money Merton receives to spend on providing services comes from the council tax residents pay. As a result of the reductions in funding from central Government, the council faced a budget gap of almost £70 million over four years.

To balance the budget for this current year (2011/12) and protect our most essential services like child protection and care for the vulnerable, Merton has already had to make savings of £24 million, which meant changes and reductions to a number of services.

Moving forward, the picture is just as difficult. Over the next three years the council will need to make an additional £44 million of savings.

Officer saving option

Since January last year, council officers have been looking at every area of the council's spending to see where savings can be made. They have asked challenging questions such as can we offer this service more efficiently, can the voluntary or private sector do it more cost effectively and even, with the depth of savings required, can we afford to continue to provide the service at all?

Each council department then put forward a number of difficult options on how it could save money. The options range from changes in the delivery of a service, to getting better deals on contracts to reducing staff numbers. Inevitably, they also include stopping some services altogether. This is the reality of the cuts the council is facing.

These savings suggestions are simply options and nothing will be definite or finalised until the budget is agreed by full council in March. The options are part of a very big picture that councillors and officers are looking at to ensure the council can do the best it can for all residents of the borough and protect essential services for those who need the council most.

**Merton
needs to save
a further
£44 million
over the next
3 years**

On 7 November Merton's Cabinet stated that it **does not support the following savings options:**

- Cabinet does not support closing libraries
- Cabinet does not support closing Morden Park leisure centre
- Cabinet does not support closing Merton's parks
- Cabinet does not support closing paddling pools
- Cabinet does not support closing children's centres
- Cabinet does not support ceasing to lock parks at night where it would create a risk
- Cabinet does not support charging for bulky waste collection
- Cabinet does not support ending weekly street sweeping
- Cabinet does not support ending the food waste service
- Cabinet does not support ending the council's CCTV service

Cabinet **does support a council tax freeze for next year.**

60% of Merton's funding comes from central Government

Timetable

October

All councillors received a list of officer options for budget savings

November 7

Cabinet announces its preferred savings options

November

Scrutiny meetings taking place to look at the options in greater detail

12 December

Cabinet meeting - further updates given to cabinet members on how the options are progressing

20 February 2012

Cabinet meeting - Merton's cabinet members agree the business plan to set out the council's priorities for the next four years 2012-2016, and further discuss the budget as part of this

7 March 2012

Merton's Full Council - all Merton councillors meet to agree the business plan and budget and in doing so agree the council tax rate for 2012-13

Priorities

The council has agreed an approach to making these very difficult decisions. We have agreed that we will continue to provide statutory services and services for vulnerable children and older people in need of care. We will also stand by our commitment to keep Merton a clean and affordable borough. After this we want to maintain Merton as a good place for young people to grow up and we want to do the best we can for the local environment.

There are some options which officers have put forward that the council's Cabinet have already said that they do not support.

Next steps

The council is very keen to make as much of the detail as possible available so residents can see why it is recommending a particular approach or why changes might be necessary.

Elected councillors and the scrutiny panels will meet many times over the next few months to discuss all the options, the potential impact the savings could have on services for residents and whether there are alternatives. The budget will then be agreed on 7 March 2012.

Find out more

All of the options are on the council's website at www.merton.gov.uk/budget

Christmas recycling and rubbish collection

Your usual collection day	Your revised collection day
Monday 26 December 2011	Tuesday 27 December 2011
Tuesday 27 December 2011	Wednesday 28 December 2011
Wednesday 28 December 2011	Thursday 29 December 2011
Thursday 29 December 2011	Friday 30 December 2011
Friday 30 December 2011	Saturday 31 December 2011
Your collections will return to normal from Monday 2 January 2012.	

**Free Christmas
tree collections**



Re-use and recycle this festive season

Are you dreaming of a 'green Christmas? Well, even if you're not, you can enjoy the festive season by taking inspiration from *My Merton's* ideas for presents, parties, food and decorations which won't cost the earth.

Buy Fairtrade

This Christmas, why not consider buying presents, cards and decorations that are Fairtrade or ethically sourced? There are many Fairtrade stockists in the borough and the range of competitively priced Fairtrade goods has increased dramatically and now includes wine, clothing and even Christmas puddings. You can find details of Fairtrade products on the Fairtrade Foundation website www.fairtrade.org.uk/products and there are many websites giving details of where you can buy ethically sourced goods.

Use energy efficient lights

Think about buying Christmas lights that are made with light emitting diodes (LEDs) – they last longer, are up to 90% more energy efficient and save you money!

Batteries are for life not just for Christmas

Long-life, rechargeable batteries will keep those new toys going longer and save you money. If you have normal batteries, some shops have battery recycling bins so once the batteries have died pop them back to the shop.

Recycle as much as you can

Recycle your cards and wrapping paper in your recycling box. You can also recycle your real Christmas tree for free right on your door step! See page 12 for more information.

Roll on 2012...

Make a New Year's resolution to join a voluntary organisation, organise a local litter pick, or if you're a dog walker join our Dog Watch scheme, www.merton.gov.uk/dogwatch



Make your freezer your festive friend

At Christmas many of us enjoy a good feast of seasonal foodies. Lots of us have eyes a bit too big for our belly and some of us buy and cook far too much. This Christmas why not re-use some of that left over food by making the most of your freezer.

- We keep our freshest (and often most expensive) food in the fridge, so keep tabs on their use-by dates. The freezer may be the best place for food you won't get around to eating in time.

- Leftover party food such as quiches and sausage rolls can be frozen over Christmas and used for lunches at home or at work. They are also great for the children to take to school.

- You can freeze most foods – even Christmas cheeses. Hard cheeses can be frozen then grated without defrosting to use as pizza toppings or cheese on toast. Stilton freezes really well and can be defrosted for the cheese board, a quiche or soup.



- Multi-buys, offers and discounts can be good value, as long as you plan how to use the extra food. Think about what festive meals you can cook with the food you buy and whether some of it could be frozen for later. Or what about sharing your bargains with family and friends?

Find out more

Useful tips on freezing foods as well as some tantalising Christmas recipes, visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com



history

Merton's business history

Merton the place for business

Merton is home to over 6,000 small businesses and many more large-scale firms. *My Merton* hit the streets to find out about some of the more established companies in the borough.

One of the oldest independent businesses in Merton is Elys in Wimbledon. The Ely family started trading in the town during the 1870s, making Elys store one of the oldest businesses in Merton. It was in 1876 that Joseph Ely opened 'Ely's Tailors, Mercers and Drapers Store' on the corner of Alexandra Road. The drapery business moved to the corner of Worple Road in 1886.

When the tram network was extended to Wimbledon in 1907, the shop-front and the adjacent road were altered to allow more turning space for the new vehicles. Even the astute businessman, Joseph Ely persuaded tram conductors to shout 'Elys Corner!' as they travelled past the store bound for Hampton Court.

During the Second World War, Elys staff often sheltered in the basement of the shop during air raids. Despite wartime hardships the store managers had high expectations of their staff. One local resident recalls an incident where a female employee went to work in trousers after her home and possessions were damaged by night-time bombing. She was reportedly told to find a skirt as her outfit did not meet the store dress regulations.

Over the centuries, the Ely family has shown great generosity in supporting their community and local charities. For example, during the nineteenth century the family provided uniforms and instruments for the Holborn Union School band, Mitcham. In more recent times they have offered financial support to Wimbledon Theatre and the Polka Theatre as well as Wimbledon Town Centre Management, Wimbledon Guild, the town centre information point and annual Winter Wonderland event.



Did you know?
The Ely family started trading in Merton in the 1870s

Merton's historic public house

Merton also boasts a number of historic pubs.

- The Rose and Crown in Wimbledon Village was founded in 1650 under its original name 'The Sign of the Rose'.
- The King's Head, now the Burn Bullock, on London Road, Mitcham dates from the Tudor period and still retains many of its historic features. By the 18th century, the building had been extensively refurbished and was a popular coaching inn.
- The oldest pub in Wimbledon is the Dog and Fox, which is thought to date back to the Middle Ages. The current name originates from the 18th century, however a 1617 survey shows that the inn was once known as 'The Sign of My Lord's Arms'.
- The White Hart on Kingston Road, Merton Park was formerly part of the estate belonging to William Rutlish, court embroiderer to Charles II. The inn was a focal point for the community and an important venue for public meetings, and sales and early court hearings. During World War II, the White Hart was seriously damaged by enemy bombs and it was not until 1958 that the building was finally reconstructed.

Top of page to bottom: Elys, Alexandra Road
The Rose and Crown, Wimbledon Village
The King's Head, Mitcham

Know about Merton's history?

Contact us and let us know
communications@merton.gov.uk

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Therapies

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Customer Services

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Latin & Streetdance)

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Lending a helping hand

My Merton highlights Merton's efforts to help victims of domestic violence and abuse.

Thankfully, domestic violence is relatively low in Merton. However, in 2010/11 there were still 849 reported domestic offences and unfortunately many more will have gone unreported.

To try and raise awareness of what domestic violence is and how people can seek help or advice, the Safer Merton Partnership is supporting White Ribbon Day 2011's campaign of 'Hands are not for hurting'.

Although domestic abuse is not always about physical violence it is often hands that are used by perpetrators. Merton is joined in its support through activities across the borough to raise awareness of the issues.

[find out more](#)

www.merton.gov.uk/domesticviolence

More helping hands are out there

Directory of services -

www.merton.gov.uk/domesticviolence

Merton Victim Support - **020 8685 1637**

Merton Police Community Safety Team - **020 8649 3065**. In an emergency call **999**

National Domestic Violence Helpline (access to refuges) **0808 2000 247**

Men's Advice Line (for male victims) - **0808 801 0327**

Broken Rainbow (advice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims) **08452 604 460**



One Stop Shop - A year on

Launched in September 2010 by Merton Council, Safer Merton and partners, the One Stop Shop is a confidential service aiming to help victims of domestic violence. At its first birthday in September this year it celebrated helping 100 people from around Merton.

Merton's 'One Stop Shop' brings together key agencies under one roof at a specific

time every week to try and help those dealing with violence in the home. Whether the help required is about housing, police, victim support, health, legal advice or other issues, the clients can discreetly ask for advice as and when they need it.

One client who was suffering severe violence at the hands of her partner came to the centre

with her young child to seek help but spoke very little English and didn't know where to turn. The Citizens Advice Bureau called in a translator and the various agencies worked together to get her and her child away from the situation and into safe housing within the week.

The One Stop Shop
Monday 9.30am - 12.30pm
Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane,
Morden SM4 5BL 020 8685 1637

Winter Safety

My Merton brings together some top tips for keeping you, your family and your possessions safe and sound this festive season.

It's not worth the risk, drink and drug driving

Drinking and being merry is a bit part of the winter and festive season for many, but unfortunately it is also this time of year when incidents of drink or drug driving increase.

Alcohol impairment was a contributory factor in 15 road collisions in Merton between 2008 and 2010, four of which caused serious casualties.

Nationally in 2009, 380 people died due to drink driving. The Government's Think! Campaign's theme is 'It's not worth the risk', warning that you could be fined up to £5,000 and receive a minimum 12-month driving ban and a criminal record for both drink and drug driving.

Everyone has a varying tolerance of drugs and alcohol, so the best advice is not to chance it.

Keeping burglars at bay

Burglary is a concern to the residents of Merton and a priority for the police, the council and all other partners, particularly around wintertime when burglary often increases.

Many burglaries can be avoided with straightforward and basic crime prevention measures. House burglars target their victims where they think they will be able to take the most property with the least risk. The following easy steps may help you and your neighbours avoid becoming victims of burglary:

- No lights mean no one is home. Leave some lights on.
- Burglars often use tools from sheds to help them break in. Lock your sheds.
- Burglars are opportunists. Keep your doors, patio doors and windows locked.
- Around Christmas don't put gifts under the tree, or if you do, pull your curtains.
- Rip up present boxes and take them to the tip – they are an indication that a house has brand new and valuable contents.
- Laptops and electronic items are the property of choice. Don't leave them where they can be seen through a window.



- Burglars pick on the weak and vulnerable. Look out for your neighbours.
- If you see anything suspicious, please call the police on 999.
- If you would like a free crime prevention survey please contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team

find out more

You can find out about your local SNT here:
www.met.police.co.uk/saferneighbourhoods

Help prevent crime all year round and join your local neighbourhood watch

Merton currently has over 550 Neighbourhood Watch schemes with nearly 580 co-ordinators.

find out more

To find out if your area is covered by a Neighbourhood Watch scheme please contact 020 8649 3213 or email mertonnhw@met.police.uk

Night time safety

When out and about this festive season remember to look out for yourself and your friends or family, particularly when getting home. Unbooked minicabs, whether an unlicensed minicab driver or a licensed minicab driver picking up passengers without a prior booking, can pose a serious risk to the travelling public.

Key tips on using minicabs:

Book it

Book your minicab with a licensed minicab operator by phone, email or in a minicab office.

Check it's yours

Make sure the driver can confirm your name and destination before you get in the car, and check the driver's photo I.D.

Sit in the back

Always sit in the back seat, and carry your mobile phone in case of an emergency.

Don't risk taking an unbooked minicab

Always use a booked and licensed minicab, taxi, night bus or the Tube to get home.

To get three local cab numbers text 'CAB' to 60835 - Texts are charged at 35p per request plus normal text message rate.

find out more

www.tfl.gov.uk/cabwise

£50 a month by wasting less food. Get tips
and advice at **lovefoodhatewaste.com**



www.merton.gov.uk

**LOVE
FOOD**
hate waste



Golden Year

News and events for Merton's over 50s this winter.



Winter Fuel Payment

Residents born on or before 5 January 1950 may be eligible to claim a tax-free winter fuel payment of up to £300. This grant can help you keep your home warm this winter.

🔗 **find out more**

www.direct.gov.uk/winterfuel

or call the winter fuel payment helpline on 0845 9 15 15.

Christmas shopping the easy way!

Help is on hand for older and disabled people who need a little bit of assistance with shopping.

On 20 November, Merton Council, in partnership with Volunteer Centre Merton, Centrecourt Shopping Centre and local schools, will offer an assisted Christmas shopping day at Centrecourt, Wimbledon.

Free transport to and from the centre is available and tea or coffee, mince pies and even helpers to carry all those bags of festive goodies will also be available on the day.

🔗 **find out more**

020 8545 4782.



Flu jab

If you are over 65 make sure you get your flu jab this winter to help keep the virus at bay.

Seasonal flu vaccination will help your body to make the antibodies needed to fight seasonal flu viruses.

High risk groups include over 65s, those who live in a residential or nursing home and main carers of elderly or disabled people.

Speak to your GP, practice nurse, or local pharmacist to book your free flu jab appointment.

Vaccinations are needed every year, don't assume because you had it last year you don't need it again.

🔗 **find out more**

www.nhs.uk/winterhealth



Young people helped out at this year's Celebrating Age festival events

Celebrating age

Merton's over 50s took part in more than 130 events as part of September's Celebrating Age festival.

A wide variety of events were held across

the borough including tap dancing, tai chi, local history talks and an international food festival. Hundreds of residents took part in computer classes, learnt poetry and went on day trips to Chartwell, Canterbury

and Portsmouth Cathedral. Next year's celebration will mark the tenth year of the event so expect an exciting line up.

🔗 **find out more**

www.merton.gov.uk/celebratingage

Building a better future

Looking after children and young people in the borough is one of the top priorities for Merton Council. Celebrating the great achievements made by children and young people who have been in Merton's care system is particularly important. *My Merton* meets resident Gemma* to highlight just one of the many inspiring stories.

Gemma* began studying at the University of Kent in September 2011 to become a social worker, after becoming more aware of issues faced by children in care. Growing up in care from the age of 11, Gemma faced difficult situations from an early age. Although she still had some support from her father, Gemma was unable to live at home and relied a lot on older siblings and social workers. After a childhood in care, Gemma wanted to give herself a new life and felt that continuing education was the way for her to do this. "I decided to go to university because I wanted to gain qualifications that will better my future career prospects. Also I saw it as way of rejecting and breaking from the negative deals and stereotypes associated with children in care."

Starting university is a big step for most young adults. It's a time of change where many teenagers leave home for the first time and begin working towards their future career. University brings together people from all walks of life and from very different backgrounds. This year, Merton is proud to see many of its pupils from local schools who are leaving to embark on their university career. Eleven of these young people are seizing the opportunity to meet the exciting challenges of academic life after spending their childhoods within the care system.

With low numbers of looked after children in higher education nationally, Merton's record number reflects the aspirational work the council's 16+ team is doing. Council officers working with young people like Gemma have inspired her goals and also her career choice. Gemma said: "I want to become a qualified social worker and work with children who have had similar experience to me. Eventually I'd like to work with teenagers and young adults in care to help steer them towards success."

11 of Merton's
looked after
children have gone
off to university
this year

Paving Merton's streets with gold

New Wimbledon Theatre has a real treat in store this festive season as it brings the story of Dick Whittington to life with an exciting cast and a show full of fun and surprises.

Running from Friday 9 December 2011 until 15 January 2012, the pantomime is bound to have all the family sitting in a row. Heading up this year's show is the one and only Dame Edna Everade who will be joined by actor and *Dancing on Ice* winner Sam Attwater and *Daybreak* and children's TV presenter Anna Williamson. *My Merton* speaks to Sam and Anna to get the backstage gossip.

Working with such a legend as Dame Edna must be quite special, are you excited?

Sam: It is a really surreal experience but it is going to be brilliant. I don't get stuck but when I first met her I was really overwhelmed and didn't know what to say.

Anna: She is an entertainment legend so it's a fabulous opportunity. I didn't know what to say either but when we first met I asked her where she was staying whilst doing the show and she said Buckingham Palace and explained that she had a shelf in the fridge at the palace for her food. I knew then it would be a one-off experience.

Both of you have done a number of pantomime before, why do you enjoy them so much?

Anna: This will be my ninth pantomime and Sam's sixth so hopefully we know the art of it by now and can really get the audience involved.

Sam: This is the best pantomime we will have been involved with though so it is still really exciting. The last two years have been mad because of what with *Dancing on Ice*, then coming on the tour and now 'Dreamboats' in the West End so every experience is different. Doing a pantomime with someone like Dame Edna will be an even better experience.

Anna: Doing pantomime is very different to the live TV. Nothing compares to the feeling of something as interactive as a pantomime. The first night nerves and excitement and then the wall of sound from the audience and the atmosphere – I can't wait.

Are you looking forward to coming to Merton?

Sam: My college – I trained at Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts – used to tour and perform at Wimbledon every year so I'm really looking forward to going back.

I've been out to the bars quite a lot in the past too so maybe we'll take Dame Edna out and show her the town.

Anna: It's a great theatre too, really beautiful and traditional.

What can theatregoers expect from Dick Whittington?

Sam: The show is going to be amazing. It is really fun, very festive, with loads of surprises, great dancing and singing. Dick's cat, Tommy, has definitely got a few tricks in his fur too.

Anna: Oh yes, the cat is certainly no budget pantomime cat. Everyone also needs to look out for a very large wombat and Dame Edna's entrance – in fact the whole show is really special and for all the family, not just the kids. It isn't called the home of London Pantomime for nothing!



WIN TICKETS
to see Dick
Whittington!
See page 7

MERTON COUNCIL

Safe hands required

Can you handle whatever life throws up?
Do you have the ability to make others feel safe and secure? If this sounds like you, get in touch **020 8545 4277**
fostering@merton.gov.uk

Fostering. Recognise the qualities you've got

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/fostering>



Delivered Meals

GREAT FOOD
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Sodexo delivered meals, delivers more than two million meals, every year direct to homes throughout the UK.

Our professional service is setting new quality standards for both hot and frozen home delivered meals.

We are confident that our meals and services will meet your standards and are happy to offer a money back guarantee if they do not!

Other Services...

As part of all the services we offer when visiting your home our trained staff will carry out a general safe and well check to ensure you are managing adequately.

We are also able to offer a companionship service. Our friendly staff will visit into your home and spend at least half an hour with you to simply talk, play a game or whatever meets your needs.

To find out about the other home based services that may be available in your area including but not limited to:

• Ironing • Laundry • Cleaning • Gardening

Please contact the number below and our staff will be happy to provide you with full details and prices.

0208 665 5688



50

Making every day a better day

Ready, Set, go!

With under a year to go until the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, *My Merton* takes a look at how Merton is developing the sports stars of the future and talks to London 2012 Organising Committee Chair Sebastian Coe.



Merton's badminton squad show off their medals at the 2011 London Youth Games.

London Youth Games 2012

We want to use the power of the London 2012 Games to inspire children and young people across Merton. One of the ways we are doing this is through the London Youth Games. Every year, aged between 11 and 18 from the 32 London boroughs and the City of London compete in over 30 different sports competitions that make up the London Youth Games.

If you would like to be part of the Merton squad and experience the London Youth Games visit our website or follow us on Facebook.

[find out more](#) people

www.merton.gov.uk/youthgames

or follow us on Facebook (Merton Active Plus)

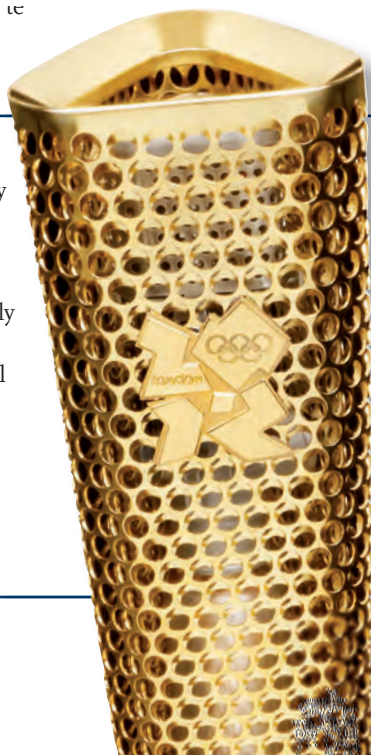
Olympic Torch Relay

The Olympic Torch Relay will visit every London borough from the morning of Saturday 21 July 2012 on its journey around the capital to the Olympic Stadium on the evening of Friday 27 July 2012. The Flame will journey through Merton on Monday 23 July, and this will be followed by an evening celebration event in Wandsworth.

[find out more](#)

For further information about the Olympic Torch Relay visit

www.london2012.com/olympic-torch-relay



(Left) The Olympic Torch designed by internationally acclaimed designers Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby.



60 seconds with Seb Coe...

Who inspired you when you were growing up?

When I was growing up in Sheffield, I was inspired to run by two Sheffield-based athletes who I saw compete on television at the 1968 Games in Mexico, John and Sheila Sherwood.

What advice would you give to anyone who wants to become an Olympic champion?

If that's what you want to do and you have the talent, leave no stone unturned to reach your goal. I used all the technology and expertise I could gather to help me improve – even by just a few hundredths of a second. These days the help on offer to those who reach elite levels is extraordinary.

What has been the highlight of your career so far?

I was fortunate enough to compete at Olympic Games and World Championships against some fantastic competitors. But the night before we won the bid to bring the Games to London. I sat in the hotel with the likes of Daisy Thompson, Jonathan Edwards, Denise Lewis and Ade Adepitan and we all agreed that we would swap that success for bringing the Games to the UK.

What's been your favourite Olympic moment?

I'm not sure I could narrow it down to one – Nadia Comăneci's perfect 10 in 1972 was unforgettable though.

With London 2012 under a year away what are you most looking forward to?

Whilst it's tempting to say 'a good holiday afterwards', I'm just looking forward to the whole event. I think London and in fact the whole of the UK will be a magical place to be next summer. Both the Olympic and Paralympic Games will live on in the memory and I'm looking forward to the UK coming together to welcome the world.



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together
to tackle
waste

CROYDON
www.croydon.gov.uk



Your comprehensive guide to what's happening in Merton. www.merton.gov.uk/events

KEY:

COLLIERS WOOD

MITCHAM

MORDEN

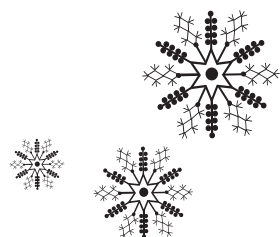
RAYNES PARK

WIMBLEDON/MERTON

Carol and Christmas event

Wimbledon Village Stable Christmas carol

Join us for a magical Christmas carol concert in a traditional setting of a stable yard, including a special visit from Santa. Hot drinks, mulled wine and mince pies available for a£. Tickets available by donation from the stable office with donations going to Royal Marsden Hospital. Saturday 10 December from 3pm, Wimbledon Village Stables, 24a/b High Street. [find out more](#) 020 8946 8579.



Christmas fair

Christmas fairs with raffles, tombolas, cakes, preserves and other stalls. There will also be music lessons and lots of good food, with visits from Father Christmas.

- Saturday 3 December 2pm-4pm, entry by donation. St Saviour's Church Hall Grand Drive, Raynes Park.

[find out more](#) 020 8540 2493.

- Saturday 10 December 1pm-4pm, Wimbledon Chase Primary School, Merton Hall Road. [find out more](#) 020 8542 1413.

Festive fayre

Celebrate Christmas with a festive market, entertainment, refreshments and Santa's Grotto. Saturday 10 December 10am-4pm, free. Tickets to see Santa are £7.50 pre-booking will be required. Morden Hall Park, Morden Hall Road, Morden. [find out more](#) 020 8545 6850.

Christmas shopping evening

Come along and get some of your Christmas shopping done early this year.

Funds raised go towards equipment for St Matthew's School.

Thursday 17 November, 7pm-9pm, £1 entry. St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Cottenham Park Road SW20 0SX. [find out more](#) 020 8947 7227.

Christmas fair

An afternoon of wintertime festivities and fun for the whole family.

Friday 2 December, 3.30pm-6pm, free entry. Wimbledon Park Primary School, Havana Road. SW19 8EJ. [find out more](#) 0208 946 4925.

Winter Wonderland in Wimbledon Park

Wimbledon Park will be transformed into a winter wonderland over the Christmas and New Year period. The main features will include an ice rink, children's fairground and refreshments. [find out more](#) Check out the Merton website for more information. www.merton.gov.uk



The Priory School carol service

Tuesday 13 December, 6pm, free entry. Holy Trinity Church, The Broadway, Wimbledon. [find out more](#) 020 8545 3517.

Hatfield Primary School Christmas fair

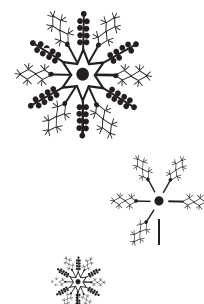
Come and enjoy many fantastic stalls, arts and crafts and shopping opportunities for all the family. There is also the chance to meet Father Christmas himself in Santa's Grotto. Saturday 10 December, 1pm-4pm, £1 per adult, children free. Hatfield Primary School, Lower Morden Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 4SJ. [find out more](#) 020 8337 1332.

Mayor's carol service

Join Merton's Mayor, Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender, for a some festive carols. Friday 16 December, 7.30pm. Trinity United Reformed Church Mansel Road, SW19. [find out more](#) 020 8545 3517.

Multi charity Christmas card shop

Open until Thursday 15 December, 10am-4pm, St Mark's Church, St Mark's Place, Wimbledon (between Wimbledon Library & Alexandra Pub). [find out more](#) 01264 361555.



Art and Entertainment

● Winter open studio art show

London's largest single site art studio complex opens its doors to the public for four days. This is the perfect opportunity to buy original pieces from over 130 emerging and established artists, including painters, sculptors, ceramicists, jewellers and photographers. With 55 extra studios opening it is even better for finding that unique or unusual Christmas present. Wimbledon Art Studios, 10 Riverside Yard, Riverside Road, London. 24-27 November, Thurs & Fri 2pm-10pm, Sat & Sun 11am-6pm, free entry. [find out more](#) 0208 947 1183.

● Come and sing Messiah

West Barnes Singers invite you to join our daytime workshop and rehearsal for Handel's Messiah and/or the evening concert. Professional soloists and our chamber orchestra will be performing. Saturday 3 December 10am-10pm, £15 workshop and concert, £10 concert only, £8 concessions, £3 children. St Paul's Church, August Road, Wimbledon Park. [find out more](#) 020 8648 3987 www.westbarnessingers.co.uk

● Art and craft workshop

An arts and craft workshop for people of all ages and abilities around the theme of 'Festivals of Light'. This session will be led by a professional artist. Saturday 10 December, 2.30pm-4.30pm, free entry. Donald Hope Library, High Street, Colliers Wood. [find out more](#) 07982 721 496 makingcollierswoodhappy.org.uk

● Morden Park Choral Society present Gilbert and Sullivan Plus

A concert featuring favourite operetta songs and choruses, conducted by David Coram. Saturday 15 October 7.00pm, £5 adults, £4 concessions. St John the Divine, High Path, Merton SW19 2JY. For more information please contact Sylvia Knight. [find out more](#) 020 8648 6445.



Staying in?

Here's a selection of what's new in Merton's libraries:

MY MERTON'S BOOK CHOICE

Christmas with Gordon: Gordon Ramsay

Gordon gives inspiration, advice and 75 fail-safe and delicious recipes for all occasions over the Christmas period. The stars of the show are 5 Christmas Feasts - suitable for whenever you choose to have your main Christmas meal.



Other new books

Fiction:

- Connolly, Michael: *The drop*
- Grisham, John: *The litigators*
- Hislop, Victoria: *The thread*
- Paolini, Christopher: *Inheritance*
- Patterson, James: *The Christmas wedding*
- Scarrow, Simon: *Praetorian*
- Willett, Marcia: *The Christmas angel*

Non-fiction:

- Baker, Danny: *Going to sea in a sieve*
- Dukan, Pierre: *The Dukan diet life plan*
- Livingstone, Ken: *You can't say that: memoirs*
- Marr, Andrew: *Diamond Queen*
- Titchmarsh, Alan: *The complete countryman*
- Wilkinson, Jonny: *Jonny: my autobiography*

NEW DVDS: MY MERTON RECOMMENDS

Kung Fu Panda 2

Po (voiced by Jack Black) is now living his dream as The Dragon Warrior, protecting the Valley of Peace alongside his friends and fellow kung fu masters. But Po's new life is threatened by the emergence of a villain, who plans to use a secret, unstoppable weapon to conquer China and destroy kung fu. A great film for all the family.

Other new DVDs:

- *Bad teacher*
- *Bob the Builder: a Christmas to remember*
- *Cars 2*
- *Horrible bosses*
- *Thomas the Tank Engine and friends: merry winter wish*
- *X-Men: first class*



Kung Fu Panda 2

Aladdin

It's pantomime time again at the Colour House Children's Theatre. Come and boo, hiss and enjoy this wonderful new musical adaptation and see what is so special about this wonderful little theatre and the outstanding shows they continue to produce year after year.

Every Saturday and Sunday from 26 November until January 29 2012, 2pm and 4pm both days.

£9 adults, £7 children.

The Colour House Children's Theatre, Merton Abbey Mills, Watermill Way SW19 2RD.

✕ **find out more**

020 8542 5511

info@colourhousetheatre.co.uk

www.colourhousetheatre.co.uk

Wimbledon Music Festival

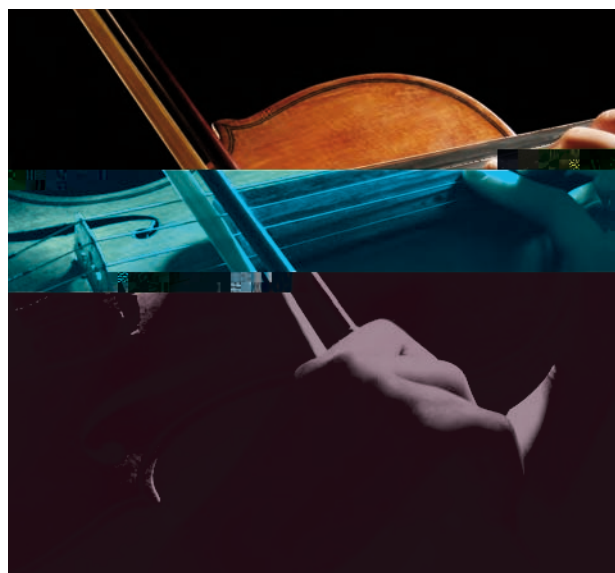
With 20 world-class events, this year's International Wimbledon Music Festival promises a feast of wonderful music.

Saturday 12 November to Sunday 27 November, tickets and locations vary for each event.

✕ **find out more**

0844 871 7685

wimbledonmusicfestival.co.uk



Wherever you work, you should be a member of the **GMB** for job security, more say at work, pensions, legal protection & compensation, better pay, a safer workplace, promoting equality, brighter prospects & more.

For more information contact the Merton Branch of the GMB

Call **020 8545 4783**

Email gmbmerton@btconnect.com

Visit www.gmb.org.uk



Working for you and with you



New Wimbledon Theatre

Box Office: 08448 717 646

www.newwimbledontheatre.co.uk

Glyndebourne On Tour

Tuesday 29 November to Saturday 3 December.

All the Fun of the Fair

David Essex stars in the hit West End musical All the Fun of the Fair, featuring a mix of David Essex hits alongside brand new songs.

Tuesday 15 to Saturday 19 November.



Dick Whittington

Make sure you join Dick Whittington and his trusted feline companion on their fun-filled quest for fame and fortune. Starring Dame Edna Everage, Sam Attwater and Anna Williamson. Friday 9 December to Sunday 15 January 2012.

Lord of the Dance

The most successful touring show in entertainment history has today played in over 65 different countries and territories, to more than 7 million people on every single continent. Since its world premiere, Lord Of The Dance has become the most talked about, the most written about and the most acclaimed show in musical history. Tuesday 28 February to Sunday 4 March.

The Russian State Ballet of Siberia

Russia's acclaimed ballet company returns to the UK with great ballet masterpieces performed by The Russian State Ballet and Orchestra of Siberia. La Fille Mal Gardée – one of the oldest ballets still to be performed featuring comedy drama and beautiful virtuoso dancing. Sleeping Beauty – the classic story of love and innocence, mystery and magic. Stunning choreography, sumptuous costumes and wonderful sets. Monday 20 January to Wednesday 1 February.



Youth

Merton Active Plus

Bookings for Christmas and February school holidays are now open. Courses include horse riding, squash, arts and crafts and music workshops just to name a few.

Find out more www.merton.gov.uk/activeplus

Active Plus



Senior Citizens

Going

Time to go to the cinema or to the theatre. In the company of...



Mitcham Horticultural Society

Come to our meeting on the last Wednesday of every month 7.30pm-10pm. We have various speakers taking on a wide range of subjects at each meeting. We also organise outings to places of horticultural interest. A Free Concert, 277 London Road, Mitcham CR4 3NT. Find out more www.mitchamhorticulturalsociety.co.uk



Family

Merton Forum for Parents of Children and Young People with Disabilities Special

Room M, Morden

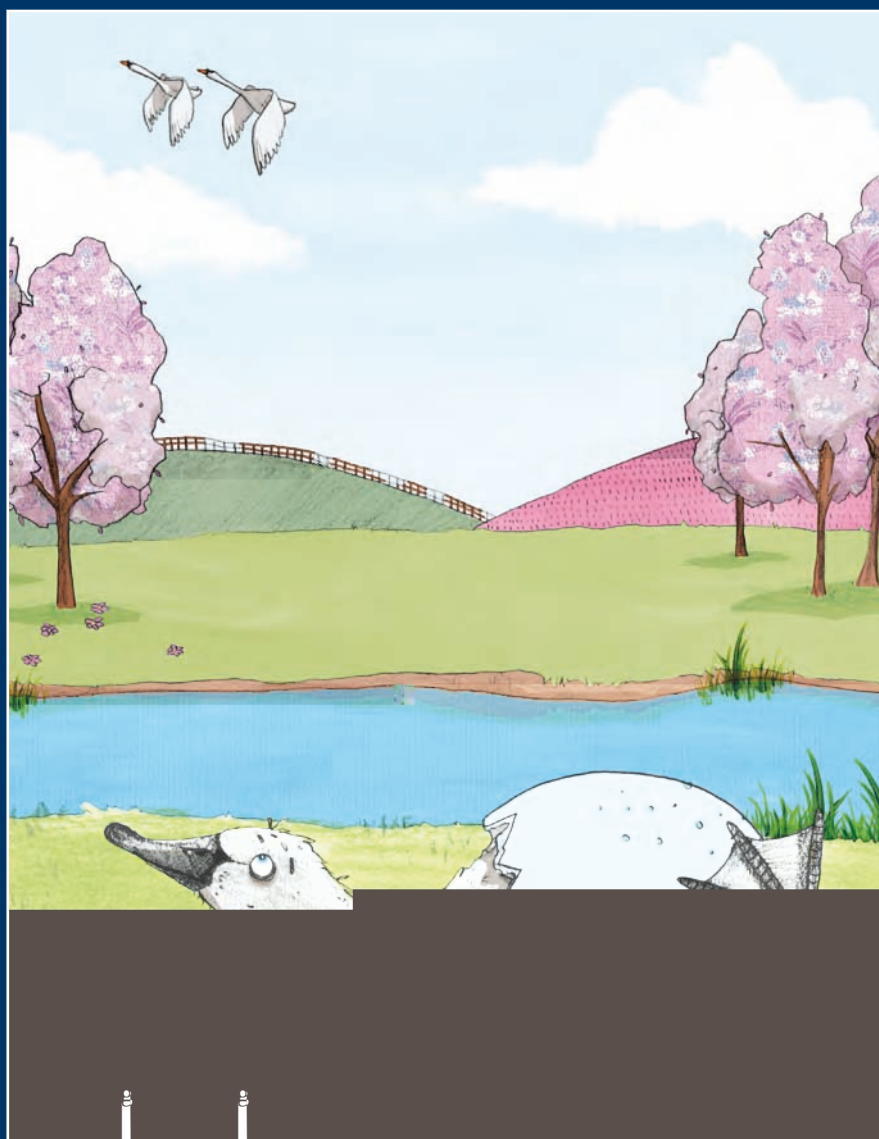


Kids first barn dance!

Free buffet and refreshments. Monday 5 December, 7.30pm-10.30pm, Mitcham Parish Village Hall, Church Path, Mitcham CR4 3BN.

Puberty and Sexuality - Mark Brown, Special help for special needs

Explore ways of supporting your child through the changes of adolescence and growing up. Chaucer Centre, Room B, Canterbury Road, Morden SM4 6PX. Find out more 020 8687 4644.



Christmas workshop - Polka Theatre

● The Ugly Duckling and Friends festive fun

Join The Ugly Duckling and some other fairy tale friends as we celebrate the festive season in this two-day drama and craft workshop. Wednesday 22 December and Thursday 23 December, 3-4 yrs (foundation) 9.45am-10.45am, 4-5 yrs (reception) 11.30am-12.30pm £25.

● Charlotte Web puppet making morning

Spend the morning transformin' loves into spider puppets and create simple marionettes and puppet farm creatures inspired by the show.

Thursday 23 December. £20, 10am-1pm, 5-7 yrs.

🔗 **find out more**

www.polkatheatre.com/whats-on

020 8543 5888.



● Family holiday activity

Take a walk and experience fresh air for all the family. Enjoy an atmospheric walk with our exciting history trail. 29 December 11am-5pm, £4 for a family of four, £1.50 for each additional person. Morden Hall Park, Morden Hall Road, Morden, Surrey. 🔗 **find out more**

020 8545 6850.



Health and Fitness

● New rider open morning

Come along and meet some of the instructors and horses, have a coffee and discuss your riding needs with our team. Learn how we do things, watch a lesson, and find out how our membership scheme works. Feel free to come alone or with a group of friends. This is for adult weekday riders of any standard including complete beginners. Tuesday 10 January, from 10.30am, free. Wimbledon Village Stables 24a/b High Street, London. 🔗 **find out more**

020 8946 8579.

● Irish dancing lessons

The Ryan Coleman Academy of Irish Dancing will be holding lessons every Thursday during term time. Children aged four and up and beginners are welcome. South London Irish Centre, Hartfield Road, Wimbledon. 🔗 **find out more**

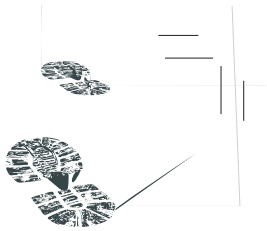
07929 237 102.

● Rayne Park Badminton Club

Small friendly club seeks average club players to join. Thursday evening's 7.30pm-9.30pm, £11 per month Raynes Park Badminton Club, Taunton Avenue. 🔗 **find out more**

07753 104 478.





BUILDERS? COURIERS? TERRORISTS?



Terrorists need transport. So naturally they need to buy a vehicle, but sometimes they can leave tell-tale signs. Signs that we need your help in spotting.

They may buy cars or vans in cash without asking the usual questions, or even taking it for a test drive.

They may try to hire vehicles using false identities.

If anything strikes you as suspicious, please call us in confidence. Your call could save lives.

**IF YOU SUSPECT IT, REPORT IT
CALL THE CONFIDENTIAL
ANTI-TERRORIST HOTLINE ON 0800 789 321**





▲▲ The value of pets cannot be underestimated, they can enhance lives enormously ▼▼

5 minute with...

Kathleen Wright

With pets often top of the list for Christmas gift, *My Merton* talks to Kathleen Wright, Hospital Operations Manager at Blue Cross Merton, about working hard to educate people on responsible pet ownership.

What is the role of Blue Cross?

The Blue Cross is a national charity dedicated to improving the lives of sick and unwanted pets. In London we have three busy hospitals providing veterinary care to pet owners on means tested benefit and low income in return for a contribution to the cost. Our Merton hospital, on Merton High Street between Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon, has been practising for 12 years and carries out over 15,000 consultations every year.

Have you always wanted to work with animals?

Absolutely. I started my career as a veterinary nurse and joined the Blue Cross almost a year ago and I love it. I have always had a great interest in animal welfare and the bond between animals and humans. The value of pets cannot be underestimated, they can enhance our lives enormously.

How is the Blue Cross working with the Merton community?

We've been very busy in Merton. Education and responsible pet ownership is a key part of our service, both in the hospital and in the community. We attended several events in Merton this summer and we've also been working hard to deliver

The People with Dogs programme, which educates young people about responsible pet ownership. We have also linked with other community organisations to look at how we work together to tackle pet-related anti-social behaviour in Merton.

What are the main issues faced by the Blue Cross during winter?

Being a very busy animal hospital, we are confronted with a variety of issues. Problems we see during winter include cats getting burns after crawling under bonnets to warm up next to the engine, and cats being poisoned after ingesting anti-freeze. Of course, there is also the issue of buying pets for Christmas. We never recommend buying an animal as a surprise gift for someone and if you are thinking of taking on a pet, always research it thoroughly and always consider giving a home to a rescue animal.

What is the best way for pet owners to keep their pets safe?

A key issue, regardless of the time of year, is to ensure that your pets are microchipped, neutered and vaccinated. It's so important that people ask questions and get the information they need to ensure that their pet is safe and healthy. Our website gives practical advice on responsible pet ownership and we have lots of helpful leaflets available to everyone at the hospital.

Find out more

www.bluecross.org.uk
0300 777 1810

Merton also offers free dog chipping - Find out more at www.merton.gov.uk/dogwatch