

Neighbourhood Watch



Welcome to this year's Neighbourhood Watch Autumn Newsletter. There's plenty to catch up on this month, including an important letter from our Chair, Hugh, guidance on AI scams, details of events coming up across Merton, and an opportunity for residents to share their views on the new Public Spaces Protection Orders. Thank you for being part of our Neighbourhood Watch community, and we hope you enjoy this edition.



Letter From The Chair



For sometime, Neighbourhood Watch Merton has been operating a dual system communicating with some members via 'Alert' and with others via email sent from a database previously maintained by Merton Council. However, this has resulted in duplication, confusion and unclear communication with members of Neighbourhood Watch in the borough. Specifically, the Merton database contains a very large number of email addresses, 10,000 which have not been weeded for many years. It simply is not up to date.

Now that the Metropolitan Police are enthusiastically encouraging residents to sign up to 'Engage' Merton's Neighbourhood Watch Committee had decided to move fully to its sister database 'Alert' by the end of 2026.

A key advantage will be to enable residents to communicate directly with police and Safer Neighbourhood Team colleagues. Improving relationships between residents and Safer Neighbourhood Teams is key to Neighbourhood Watch's vision of building safer, stronger and more connected communities [Join Alert Here](#)

'Alert' also offers the chance to sign up for messages from other community safety minded organisations. A personal favourite of mine is Report Fraud. This organisation provides periodic useful updates on current scams - one of the biggest and growing threats to all of us.

There are currently 3,106 Merton Neighbourhood Watch members registered on 'Alert'. 51 of these are registered as coordinators of local Schemes. These are lower numbers than on the Merton database but they are more current and 'Alert' provides an easier channel for two-way communication to ensure details remain up to date.

The Committee is aware that in this change we run the risk of losing contact with Neighbourhood Watch members in Merton, but by giving a three month window for the change and sharing information on how to sign up to 'Alert' regularly in the meantime, we hope to minimise that risk. Every communication between now and the New Year will carry a reminder of how to register with Neighbourhood Watch on 'Alert' and Mark Robinson will provide whatever help he can for those struggling to do so.

The Committee appreciates this will be an inconvenience for some, but we hope to see as many members as possible on 'Alert' in the New Year so between us we can help foster safer, stronger and more connected communities in Merton. Our last email will be sent on the 8th January 2027.



Public Space Protection Orders

Merton Council is consulting on proposals for three new Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) in Merton relating to:

- Anti-social behaviour in public spaces (includes several prohibitions).
- Vehicle engine idling
- School keep-clear (zig-zag) markings outside schools

The proposals aim to help address issues that affect people using public spaces, and support cleaner, safer and more welcoming neighbourhoods across the borough.

We would like to hear from residents, businesses, local organisations, visitors and anyone who spends time in Merton.

You can find out more about the proposals and share your views by completing our online survey via Commonplace. You can also find out more at our in-person engagement events in October.

The consultation is open until Monday 2 November 2026.

Find out more and have your say by visiting the page below:

[Have Your Say Today - Merton Public Spaces Protection Orders \(PSPOs\) - Commonplace](#)

Please take your time to fill in the surveys. Consultation feedback will help shape our PSPOs.



Share your views on
proposals to create

SAFER
CLEANER
AND MORE
WELCOMING

public spaces in Merton

Have your say on proposed Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), covering:



**Anti-Social
Behaviour in
public spaces**

Helping to address issues
such as alcohol-related
nuisance, dog control, and
other behaviours.



**Vehicle
Engine Idling**

Helping to reduce
unnecessary vehicle
engine idling,
improve air quality and
reduce noise.



**School Keep-Clear
Zig-Zag Markings**

Keeping school entrances
clear and improving
safety for children and
pedestrians.



Consultation closes on **Monday 2 November 2026**
Visit mertonpspo.commonplace.is or scan the
QR code to find out more.



CCTV Good News

Mitcham

CCTV tracking helps officers apprehend suspect carrying bladed weapon

During routine night-time monitoring of the town centre, CCTV operators spotted a male wearing a balaclava and showing interest in a bicycle, raising concerns about his intentions. Police were immediately notified and provided with the male's location. Just a minute before officers arrived, the male made off from the area on the bicycle. CCTV operators maintained continuous observation and provided police with live updates on his direction of travel. Officers followed the information provided by CCTV and located the male shortly afterwards. Following a brief foot chase, the male was arrested. A bladed weapon was also found in his possession. This incident highlights the importance of proactive night-time CCTV monitoring and continuous communication with police, with live updates helping officers quickly locate and apprehend a suspect and supporting the safety of the wider community

Wimbledon

CCTV monitoring helps identify suspects following e-bike theft

During routine monitoring of the town centre, CCTV operators observed a large group of youths travelling through the area on e-bikes. Some of the males were known for previous anti-social behaviour, so operators maintained close observation of the group and monitored their movements. Later, a report was received that two of the males had been robbed of their e bikes. CCTV operators reviewed the available footage and identified relevant images and movements from the earlier monitoring. The footage was supplied to police to assist with their investigation and helped officers identify individuals believed to be involved in the incidents. This incident demonstrates the value of proactive CCTV monitoring, with operators' observations and recorded footage providing important evidence to police and supporting the identification of suspects following reported offences

Colliers Wood

CCTV and wardens provide vital welfare support to two males

During routine monitoring of Colliers Wood, CCTV operators spotted a male lying on the ground. Operators observed that the male appeared to be breathing steadily and was likely asleep, however, due to concerns for his welfare, wardens were immediately contacted to investigate further. Wardens attended the location and attempted to provide welfare support. The male subsequently collapsed, and wardens placed him in the recovery position while awaiting the arrival of an ambulance. At the same time, a second male suffered a seizure inside a shop in Colliers Wood. Wardens were also on hand to provide immediate welfare assistance until another ambulance crew arrived. This incident highlights the important role of CCTV in identifying potential welfare concerns and the effective coordination with wardens, helping ensure vulnerable members of the public receive prompt assistance when needed.

Morden

Missing care home resident located following CCTV search

CCTV operators received a call from a care home reporting that a minor resident had gone missing from the premises. An immediate area scan was carried out, and the male was quickly located by CCTV operators. As the incident had not yet been reported to police, operators promptly informed officers and provided the male's live location and movements. A police unit attended the area and located the male safely. He was then returned to the care home. This incident highlights the important role of CCTV in safeguarding vulnerable members of the community, with a prompt area search and live location updates helping police quickly locate the missing resident and ensure his safe return



Autumn Newsletter

Women's Wellbeing Collective CIC. Registered company 15397120



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Visualisation: Master somatic tools to embody future goals today

Empowerment: Become the confident creator of your path



Tuesdays 3, 10, 17, 24 November and
1, 8 December 2026



10am-12pm



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AI Scams

What is an AI scam?

An AI scam uses artificial intelligence (AI) to create the content of the scam, which could feature text, video, audio and images. Fraudsters typically use generative AI tools, including chatbots and image, video and audio-generation software to create these scams.

Generative AI refers to AI tools that 'generate' text, images and other content, usually in response to prompts.

Most of this software is free and accessible to anyone with a computer and internet connection, because it's also used for legitimate purposes. However, its increased accessibility has led to a surge in scams that use AI.

Essentially, AI makes scams more convincing and harder to spot, which means it's important to become familiar with these new methods to stay one step ahead of the scammers.

Types of AI scams

Deepfake videos

A deepfake video is where the person in it has been digitally altered to appear as a different person or a video that has been entirely AI-generated.

Fraudsters use this technique to make it appear as if someone, usually a popular celebrity or trusted person, is saying something they're not.

For example, they can make it seem like a celebrity is promoting their phoney investment scheme with words from their own mouth. Meanwhile, the video is a complete fake.

Deepfake videos can also be used to steal people's identities or to pass verification checks and access victims' accounts as well as to create images of completely non-existent people.

5 tips to spot a deepfake video:

- Some deepfake videos use lip-syncing, so watch the video carefully for lip-syncing that's slightly off.
- Pay attention to details in the quality – do the hair, lighting and skin tone of the person look believable? Is there any blurring in the video? Also, are there details in the video that disappear? For example, does a person have a mole and then suddenly doesn't?
- Listen out for strange background noises or robotic voices.
- Look for unnatural expressions – it's hard to mimic natural blinking, and AI often lacks facial emotion and AI body movements can seem off.
- Where does the video come from? If it's not an official account or if it's an account you've never heard of and you haven't seen the video anywhere else, be wary.



Voice cloning scams

Voice cloning is when a person's voice is recorded and then used to create audio content of that person speaking.

Fraudsters can use a voice recording of someone to make them say anything that they want them to.

In scary examples we've come across, scammers have used the voice of a person to create a more menacing version of the 'Hi mum and dad' scam.

Victims receive calls out of the blue from a loved one in distress who eventually needs them to transfer money for some made-up emergency.

How to spot the signs of voice cloning:

- The caller likely won't say much – perhaps they'll just say something short like 'please help me'.
- Laugh to see if they're a real person – Vidby, an AI-powered voice translation company, says that AI has difficulty recognising and responding to laughter, so saying something off-topic could trip it up. You could also test it and see if it's able to sing, Vidby suggests that 'for more effect, ask the caller to sing the song in a language other than the original. This is a very difficult task for AI.'
- Listen for unusual background noises and unexpected changes in the tone of the caller that indicate you aren't having a real-time conversation with a person. Vidby also suggests listening out for unusual pauses.
- Ask the caller for as much detail as possible, as only the real person will know these.
- You're asked to make a payment using gift cards or cryptocurrencies, as these are typical of scams.
- Phishing messages
- Phishing messages sent via text and email, as well as scam social media posts and adverts attempt to prompt you into following a phishing link that will ask for personal and/or financial information.
- This is typically done by impersonating well-known brands and asking you to update your account information or to follow a link to receive a prize.
- With generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, fraudsters are able to create much more convincing messages, free from the poor spelling and grammar we've always relied on to spot scams.



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How to spot a phishing scam:

- Most genuine companies address you by your name and also include personal account details, such as your mobile phone number or part of your account number.
- Messages asking for personal and financial data should be treated with caution.
- Be wary of messages with attachments, as most companies don't include these, and this is how scammers spread malware.
- All phishing messages contain links. Even though legitimate companies also send messages with links, you should hover over the link to see if it leads to the brand's official website.
- Brands will use their official email addresses, so always check the sender's address on emails.
- Always check the number that texts are sent from – although numbers can be spoofed, a seemingly random number is always a red flag.
- Scammers want to push you to act quickly, so be wary of a sense of urgency.
- Check the branding for blurred or pixelated images that don't use the company's latest brand colours.
- AI-generated images
- How to spot an AI-generated image:
 - The image looks slightly cartoonish or too perfect.
 - You search the image using Google image search or a tool like TinEye and retrieve no results.
 - The context doesn't match up - are you seeing a perfectly groomed person against a dirty or scruffy backdrop?
 - Details which are off, such as the lighting, hair and facial features looking strange.
- 7 ways to protect yourself from online scams
- Some methods of safeguarding yourself from these scams include:
 - Downloading effective antivirus onto your devices to fight malware.
 - Being wary of any out-of-the-blue, unexpected contact.
 - Verifying any information you're given with the brand or person it claims to be from. This can be done by checking official accounts and websites or contacting the friend or relative 'calling' using a different method.
 - Not disclosing any personal or financial information over text, email or phone or on any website you visit before you've verified its legitimacy.
 - Being wary of anyone prying or pressuring you into handing over any sensitive information.
 - Watching out for a sense of urgency.
 - Creating a password among your family and friends and asking them to repeat it in emergencies, or asking them a question only they'd know the answer to.
- How to report a scam
- On social media, there are usually three dots in the top right-hand corner of a post or advert that will allow you to report it.
- Report scam texts by forwarding them to 7726 and report emails by sending them to report@phishing.gov.uk.
- Phishing websites can be reported to the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).
- If you become the victim of a scam, call your bank immediately using the number on the back of your bank card and report it to Report Fraud (formerly known as Action Fraud), or call the police on 101 if you're in Scotland.

<https://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/advice/how-to-spot-and-avoid-ai-scams-aaDn52A8nDhR>



Join **Voicebox** for a **free 1-hour online webinar** for parents and carers in Merton.

Explore the pressures and messages shaping young people's ideas about masculinity, identity and fitting in, and learn **practical ways** to **navigate peer pressure**, **keep communication open** and **support your child** grow into a confident, caring and emotionally resilient person.

Online via Zoom.

Exclusively for Merton residents and/or parents and carers of pupils at Merton schools



Free Parent Webinar

10 December 2026 | 6pm – 7pm



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Autumn Newsletter

Whats going on?

Fireworks In The Park

Thursday 5 November Wimbledon Park, Saturday 7 November Morden Park

Our ever-popular family-friendly fireworks displays are back. Expect stunning shows set to music plus funfair, a mouth-watering selection of street food plus bars and funfair.

Thursday 5 November Wimbledon Park, Saturday 7 November Morden Park.

Fireworks in the park

Enchanted Autumn Fest

Morden Hall Park

22nd - 31st October

Step into a world of wonder inside Morden Park's expansive and winding treelines. Each twist and turn invites you to experience unique sights that spark joy and curiosity. We will curate a trail to create a winding treeline pathway over 500m long! Leading into the treeline will be a thrilling trail alongside The Graveyard. Our light trail will feature a full set of lights, lasers, smoke, and a full dynamic range of props from the same team that lights up the EDEN Project every Christmas. it's going to be BIG.

<https://autumnfest.co.uk/>

Mitcham Film, TV and Comic Festival

Sunday November 22nd 2026 10:30 - 17:00

Canons Leisure Centre, Mitcham, CR4 4HD

Mitcham Comic Fest celebrates the world of comics, gaming, TV, film and pop culture, with celebrity guests, cosplay, live entertainment, traders, artists and fan communities. It's a lively event designed to bring together fans of all interests.

Featuring:

★ Celebrity Guests

★ Soap Stars

★ Traders & Independent Artists

★ Power Rangers Stars

★ Live Professional Wrestling

★ Cosplay & Fan Communities

★ Gladiators Stars

★ Autographs & Photo Opportunities

★ Live Q&A Panels

<https://www.beweevents.co.uk/mitchamcomicfest>

