**JULY 2021**



**Registered Charity No. 1075388**

**Tel No: 020 8540 5446**

[**www.mertonvision.org.uk**](http://www.mertonvision.org.uk)

**Guardian Gazette**

**Welcome to our brilliant summer issue!**

**![C:\Users\Sally May\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\IE\95LWWNNO\Sun-PNG-Clipart[1].png]()**

This edition will be concentrating on MertonVision:

And we have great news: The Guardian Centre is opening this month!

We wish to send a huge thank you to all our staff, trustees and volunteers for how brilliantly they have worked during the lockdowns and wish to thank everyone for their support and understanding.

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\*all information contained within correct at time of going to press

**Breaking News!**

We are delighted to announce that the Guardian Centre will be opening this month!

From July 20th we very much look forward to welcoming you back.

We will start gradually and in line with the government guidelines as they will be from that date.

We plan to open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:30-12:30 for coffee mornings.

These will follow the lines of our old coffee mornings but will be socially distanced and by appointment only initially. Mark will be on hand for transport as before for those who need it and the minibus transport will be restricted by any government guidelines.

Clients who express an interest will be offered an appointment on one of the days this is to ensure that we can safely include all those who wish to attend.

The costs will remain the same: £4.80 for transport and £1.20 coffee and staff and volunteers will be on hand to ensure you are well looked after.

Whatever the latest guidelines by July 20th we will still practice social distancing and have new medical masks and sanitizer for you; your safety is of paramount importance to us.

Those who would like to attend are asked to let us know and to indicate which day they prefer, we shall try hard to accommodate everyone’s choices. In the office Emma will log the details she will also be calling clients to gauge interest.

After an initial two weeks, and judging by interest, we may also look at providing entertainment to accompany the coffee mornings. We are happy to consider any suggestions you may have in regards to entertainment.

**Free Summer BBQ !**

**August 19th at The Guardian Centre 2-8pm.**

We would like to invite all our clients, supporters, volunteers and trustees to a great Thank You summer BBQ. This will also be a welcome back and a goodbye to the Guardian Centre! The BBQ will be free to all attendees. Just so we have an idea of numbers for the catering please let the office know if you would like to attend info@mertonvision.org.uk 020 8540 5446. The minibus will be available for those unable to travel; this too will need to be booked by contacting the office. We look forward to seeing you all there. Fingers crossed for sunshine!!

**OTHER NEWS:**

Building update: We will be moving to the Wilson Hospital, temporarily, in early December. We will update everyone as soon as we have dates confirmed.

**Staff update**

Just to let you know that our Volunteer Co-ordinator will be unavailable from July 15th until end of August so during this time all volunteer requests will come through info@mertonvision.org.uk and 020 85405446.

**TENNIS!**

The Wimbledon Foundation **v**ery kindly donated 2 pairs of tickets for Centre Court on opening day, Monday 28th June, to MertonVision. The lucky winners were staff member Sally May, Chair of the Trustees Harry Cowd and volunteers Fran Henshall and Sarah Coutts. We all enjoyed an amazing day of tennis and send our thanks again to the Wimbledon Foundation.

As part of the Wimbledon Fortnight the WF were looking for local Champions: staff members Mark Compton and Wendy Walsh and volunteer Paul McCathy were nominated for going above and beyond during the Pandemic. Photographs of them holding their ‘Trophy’ certificates were uploaded to WF Facebook page and posted on our Instagram. Well done!

**100 CLUB**

Congratulations to our latest winners!

May: 1st Prize £25 Joanne Flaherty

 2nd Prize £10 Allen Richardson

June: 1st Prize £25 Hazel Lloyd

 2nd Prize £10 Martyn Adams

For just **£12** a year you can take part in our brilliant monthly draw!

You have the chance to win the main prize, second prize, 2 bonus prizes of £50 during the year and a Christmas bonus of £100. We really need new participants to increase the membership, the more people that enter the bigger the prizes! If you would like to take part just call us on **020 8540 5446**.

This is a great way to help support your charity.

**MertonVision still providing support:**

**Help with food shopping**

We just want you to know that if you are struggling to cover the cost of food shopping that there are a number of excellent food charities providing support. Please contact the office for further information.

**Home shopping/Volunteer**

MertonVision have now streamlined our volunteer services in response to lessening of lockdown rules. Please be assured that home visiting, shopping and prescription collection will continue for those who are unable to leave home. We will provide any assistance required to achieve this, for example we can help set up online shopping or phone shopping if you did not have this previously or to set up pharmacy deliveries where possible. To facilitate our shopping service we ask all clients to send one weekly submission and to allow MertonVision sufficient time to organise a volunteer. As part of this streamlining please try not to add additional items as we cannot guarantee being able to pass them on to the volunteer in time.

**Help with form filling**

We have two brilliant volunteers who can help with filling out Blue Badge applications, Taxi card applications and benefit form. They are able to do this at the Guardian Centre or in your home if you are unable to travel.

**Help with prescription collection**

For those of our clients who are still unable to leave their homes our volunteer team will collect your urgent prescriptions.

**Telephone supporter/befriender service**

We are very happy to be able to offer this service at MertonVision. The process involves a volunteer phoning one or more clients on a regular basis eg once a week or once a fortnight. They will ask how you are and if you are experiencing any difficulties or problems and if there has been a change in your circumstances which we may be able to help with. This could include allocating a home visitor to do weekly shopping, to deal with correspondence, applications for benefits or referrals to another service. They could also help you with a new hobby or class or event which you might like to attend. This is a similar service to that which staff has been offering but this service will be initiated at a clients’ request.

And we have great news - we have more new volunteers who have subscribed to help our telephone befriending service. If you would like someone to phone you on a regular basis for a friendly chat or to just get something off your mind then do let us know.

**MertonVision Counselling Service**

We are offering a new counselling service with a visually impaired, qualified therapist who has experience of working with people in the following areas:

• Disability and sight-loss
• Long term illness and end-of-life care.
• Bereavement and grief
• Adult carers
• Depression & Anxiety
• Domestic abuse

The service will offer confidential, person-centred counselling that is free of charge to anyone wishing to talk through worries or concerns they may have.

There will be an initial telephone session, arranged in advance to check if counselling is right for you at this time.

This first session will last around an hour and you will be able to ask any questions about the service or counselling in general.

If you are happy to take up counselling, you will be allocated 8 weekly sessions lasting 50 minutes each, carried out on a Wednesday at an agreed

time. These sessions will currently take place over the telephone, owing to restrictions in place due to Covid 19.

Although there are plans to resume face-to-face counselling when we are able, the telephone option can be made available for anyone finding this more accessible.

If you are interested, please contact MertonVision on **0208 540 5446** or email **info@mertonvision.org.uk** with the subject line ‘Counselling’.

Please be aware that there are a limited number of places available and so there may be a waiting list.

**MertonVision Volunteers**

Our volunteer co-ordinator Carmel would like to say a big “Thank You” to all our wonderful volunteers who have worked and continue to work shopping and collecting prescriptions, filling in forms and keeping in touch by phone with their respective clients, all through the Covid period.

**GIVE AS YOU LIVE**

All events are on hold until further notice however you can still support us through Give As You Live – Raise money for MertonVision online shopping!

**A free way to raise money for charity when you shop online!**

Shop at over **4,300 leading stores** via the Give As You Live website and you'll raise free funds for your chosen charity.

* It's completely free to join and use
* It’s a great way to raise money for charity for free
* Shop at over 4,300 leading stores with access to great offers

**How to get started**

* Go onto the Give as you Live website www.giveasyoulive.com
* Create an account
* Select MertonVision as your chosen Charity
* Select the store you want to shop at, the site will redirect you to that store
* Start shopping!!

As long as you log in through Give as you Live MertonVision will receive a donation every time you shop!

**MEET THE TEAM!**

You may know most of us but we do have a few new people to introduce:

Kevin F/T Chief Executive Officer, at MV for 15 years

Sam: F/t Rehab Officer, at MV for 21 years

Mark: F/t IT support and driver at MV for 24 years

Sally: F/t Admin and front of house at MV for 2 ½ years

Wendy – P/t Office Manager, at MV for 22 years

Carmel – p/t Volunteer Co-ordinator, at MV for 13 years

Grace: p/t ECLO based at St Georges.

**NEW staff:**

Emma: p/t Support worker to Kevin

Joy: p/t Working Age Group Outreach Worker

Susie: p/t Support worker to Joy

**AND THEIR FAVOURITE SPORTS!**

Kevin, Wendy and Mark – football!

Sally, Susie and Emma – tennis

Sam - Boxing

Joy- (listens to football)

**MERTONVISION QUIZ** –

How well do you know us! Just for fun, answers at the end…

**QUESTIONS**

1. Name the married couple who started the coffee mornings
2. Which building will we be moving into temporally at the end of the year?
3. How much will coffee or tea and biscuits cost at our coffee mornings?
4. Who was the manager before Kevin?
5. What is the name of the cook who made our wonderful Thursday lunch club lunches?

**INFORMATION**

**Connecting Merton – Free help to Improve Your Digital Skills**

Merton Library and Heritage Service is launching a project called Connecting Merton to help vulnerable and isolated people in Merton develop their digital skills and MertonVision are working with them to help bring this to you.

Our aim is get you online regardless of your sight loss. You will receive the support and training needed to gain valuable digital skills.

We are working with Merton Libraries to ensure VI people can access this scheme. Please contact us for any help with accessible technology, with getting a library card or completing the forms.

The project aims to reduce digital exclusion in the borough through this innovative scheme to enable vulnerable and isolated residents to get laptops and tablets on loan from Merton libraries for a period of 3 months.

Volunteers will support residents taking part in the scheme remotely and when it’s advisable, at the libraries. As well as 1:1 support, residents will be able to attend IT courses run by Merton Adult Learning to develop their digital skills

**They have Laptops, Tablets and Amazon Echo Show on offer:**

Amazon Echo Show is a smart speaker which uses Amazon's virtual assistant Alexa. Additionally it features an 8-inch touchscreen display that can be used to show visual information to accompany its responses. In addition it can play video and conduct video calls with other Echo Show users. To use the device borrowers will need internet access and access to an amazon account. They can help support users set an amazon account up as part of this project.

**Features:**

* Watch videos and movies
* Make video calls
* Listen to music
* Use as a digital photo frame
* Set reminders for appointments and medication
* View and edit your calendar
* Find out the weather

**To borrow any equipment:**

* You must be a vulnerable Merton resident aged 18+
* Have a Merton library card in good standing, which means: no outstanding fines or fees, or history of lost items
* Be able to provide photo ID when you borrow the device or two forms of ID such as bank statement, NI card etc

**Terms and Conditions**

The main terms of the loan are:

* Maximum of one device to be borrowed per person at a time
* Three month loan period with the option of renewing for a further three month loan (maximum two renewals) if no one is waiting to borrow
* If lost or damaged charges will be applied depending on the device you've borrowed
* Borrowers will need to sign a loan agreement form and agree to the Terms and Conditions of use

**Register your Interest**

To register your interest in getting a device please complete [this form](https://libraries.merton.gov.uk/custom/web/content/Connecting%20Merton%20-%20Expression%20of%20interest%20form.docx) and email it to Merton.Libraries@merton.gov.uk

You can also pick up a form from any of our libraries and return it there.

For more information email Merton.Libraries@merton.gov.uk

**Are you a pc savvy volunteer or do you know one??**

If so MertonVision would love to hear from you. This would enable us to help some of our clients to access digital equipment. We will provide training for volunteers on accessible technology at our Centre. Please just contact the office info@mertonvision.org.uk or 020 85405446

**MV MEMBERSHIP –**

For only £12 a year you can support MertonVision. We rely on these regular

subscriptions to help maintain vital services. Thank you for your support.

**Merton Sports and Social Club –**

MSSC is an integrated sports and leisure club, founded in the 1970’s, with both vision impaired and sighted members from within Merton and surrounding areas. All ages and abilities are welcome.

We are delighted to have been able to run several rides since the partial lifting of restrictions on 17th May. On 22nd May, we had four rides from beginner to advanced, which included a total of thirteen tandem pairs and one solo rider. Three of those tandems headed for the Vineries Garden Centre in Bookham, five to All Saints Coffee Shop in Leatherhead, three to the Pen Ponds café in Richmond Park and three new stokers with experienced pilots rode to the Cafeteria in Wimbledon Park.

On 5th June, we ran another three rides to Wimbledon Park, Richmond Park and Walton-on-the-Hill respectively, involving a total of twenty-four participants, several of whom were riding with MSSC for the first time, some having attended training workshops just before the lockdown in 2020.

Tandem Workshop

On Saturday 19th June, we ran our first beginner/refresher workshop of the year with a mixture of brand new riders, some who had had a long break and others who just wanted a bit more practice. After a few circuits of the quiet streets around the Guardian Centre, we set off in two groups of ten to cycle a few miles to the Courtyard cafe in Morden Hall Park. This provided experience of starting and stopping, crossing main roads, negotiating barriers and, of course, drinking coffee while chatting with fellow participants

What does the MSSC have to offer?

Weekly Socials, Tandem Cycling, Fitness Sessions, Walking, Swimming, Canoeing, Theatre Trips, Bowls, Darts, Quizzes

For more information please visit their website at [www.mssc.org.uk](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=http%3a%2f%2fwww.mssc.org.uk&c=E,1,Q0Xq_66vQAVRoK9peK9R1nDlsPakQKuDqnupjFS3BkLkqs57WfU0tLwv3zyzsThAYPMybXjmc4_ozc45DfESugusHzASxPDiZ_HTkS8x&typo=1) or email info@mssc.org.uk.

**MTN Talking Newspaper are planning to restart production on the first Thursday of August, August 5th**

MTN produce a recording of the local news and a magazine once a week which is posted out on Fridays to all who request it

**MertonVision QUIZ – ANSWERS!**

1. Mr and Mrs Hetty and Eddie Wall
2. The Wilson Hospital
3. £1.20
4. Fran Hibbert
5. Marvlyn

**MertonVision**

**The Guardian Centre**

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**SW19 2DX**

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