

# Brightside

Issue 206 December 2024

The magazine of Wandsworth Council



# Merry Christmas

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Cover image: Northcote Road Christmas lights

To obtain a copy of Brightside in large print please telephone (020) 8871 7266 or email [brightside@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:brightside@wandsworth.gov.uk)

## OUR BRIGHTSIDE

Brightside is delivered to every home in the borough and pushed fully through the letterbox.

If you have any suggestions for articles or have a story you would like to tell us about please email: [brightside@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:brightside@wandsworth.gov.uk) or call:

**Editorial (020) 8871 8902 Advertising (020) 8871 7266**

We would love to hear from you.

Brightside is printed on environmentally friendly paper, please recycle.



# Join the fun at parkrun

We've brought parkrun to Battersea Park to help give local people a free and fun way to get active.

The first official public event in October was the most attended parkrun in the world, with more than 1,000 determined runners taking part, putting the event firmly on the map.

People can enjoy parkrun and junior parkrun on Tooting Common, with around 800 people taking part in the senior event each week. Earlier this year the council also helped bring junior parkrun to Battersea Park.

Council Leader Simon Hogg, pictured above, said: "Residents have long asked us to bring parkrun to the beautiful Battersea Park. We treated this request as a priority and are delighted to deliver on our promise to bring free and accessible exercise to one of London's most iconic parks."

Anyone can attend a parkrun, but you are encouraged to register before you come. Visit [parkrun.org.uk/register](https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register)





# WELCOME TO WANDSWORTH

London Borough of Culture

## Get ready for our Year of Culture

As the Mayor of London's London Borough of Culture 2025, we can't wait to deliver a year to remember.

From Roehampton to Battersea, Tooting to Putney, every corner of Wandsworth will come alive in an explosion of creativity. We are working collaboratively with arts, culture, business, voluntary and community partners to build an unforgettable programme launching in February that will bring out the best in Wandsworth, celebrate our communities and showcase the talent of our borough.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, joining our freelance database and more, visit our newly launched website [welcometowandsworth.com](https://welcometowandsworth.com)

You can also follow [@welcometowandsworth](https://www.facebook.com/welcometowandsworth) on Facebook and Instagram and [@wtowandsworth](https://www.x.com/wtowandsworth) on X





Handing out Warm Homes Packs

# Help this winter

To find out about all this help, visit Cost of Living Hub [wandsworth.gov.uk/hub](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/hub) or call on **0808 175 3339**

Here's some of the support you can get from the council to help you get through the winter months. Wandsworth continues to deliver the most generous cost-of-living package in London

Eligible residents have been given **Warm Home Packs** for the second year in a row. Last year, it's estimated they saved Wandsworth residents over half a million pounds in energy bills.

This year, we have expanded the programme to reach even more people. Each pack contains energy-saving measures such as LED light bulbs, radiator foil, and draught-excluding tape, which can significantly reduce home energy costs. Anyone who received a warm pack last year, can now get a home visit from SW Leap, which will suggest tailor-made energy-saving solutions for their home to further reduce their bills.

Elaine, a local resident benefitting from this year's scheme, has a draughty home. "When you put the heating on, you don't get the benefit, and it costs a lot of money. Last winter, I had no money, no electricity, and no gas. I had to wear woolly hats and gloves to keep warm."

We're giving extra support to low-income pensioners this winter worth up to £300. We've written to eligible residents to confirm they will receive the **Wandsworth Winter Support Payment**.

We have written to residents we think are eligible for Pension Credit. The deadline to claim is December 21, so if you think you are eligible, take action now. Call the Pension Credit Claims Enquiry line on **0800 99 1234**

If you're struggling with debt or housing issues, **early help** is available. Contact the council or our trusted partners at Citizen's Advice, or Age UK. Taking action now can prevent more serious problems later. For those on a low income, consider applying for Council Tax Reduction.

Check if you qualify on our website [wandsworth.gov.uk/council-tax-discounts-exemptions-and-reductions](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/council-tax-discounts-exemptions-and-reductions)

We have a network of **Community Spaces** across the borough, including libraries and children's centres. You can keep warm, chat with friends and neighbours, take part in free activities and even get a free hot drink or meal. **Find your nearest at [wandsworth.gov.uk/community-spaces](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/community-spaces)**



Council leader Simon Hogg and the council's Cost of Living support team went along to the Wandsworth Older People's Forum conference last month to join discussions around paying bills, rising prices, community food programmes and transport.

Tooting-based Esther Persaud said she was "delighted this forum opens up the room for people to raise these issues."

"The Cost of Living crisis is hard for older people, and it's worse for those who are isolated so the support helps."

# Give the Power to Connect

More than 3,600 devices have been donated so far to Power to Connect to tackle digital exclusion and make sure local families can get online.

Power to Connect was set up during the pandemic in partnership with the council and relies on donations from local people and businesses. Requests are surging and devices including laptops, tablets and smartphones are needed.

Fill out the donation form at [powertoconnect.co.uk](http://powertoconnect.co.uk) and donate via drop-off, postal delivery, or arrange for collection. Skilled IT volunteers will securely wipe data and repair devices before redistributing them to those in need in Wandsworth.

Power to Connect also runs Digital Drop-ins in Battersea, Roehampton, Battersea Park and Tooting Libraries. Get expert advice on all things digital.

**Find out more on the website or call 07934 553192**  
[powertoconnect.co.uk](http://powertoconnect.co.uk)



Wandsworth  
Council

## Cost of Living support

- Help with grants, bills and benefits
- Support for families
- Where to turn in a crisis and more



visit: [wandsworth.gov.uk/hub](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/hub)

call: 0808 175 3339





Council staff have been attending local events to spread the message about Access for All offers.

# Creating Access for All

Our Access for All scheme has helped thousands of people enjoy the opportunities that Wandsworth has to offer.

Access for All offers free and discounted activities to eligible people on a range of benefits – with more to come.

So far **3,300 people** have taken advantage of swim and gym sessions in council-run leisure centres, and around **100 children** have had free intensive swimming lessons. Other popular activities include padel, tennis and Putt in the Park - see the Access for All webpage for details. We also offered **5,000 people** half-price access to the Battersea Park fireworks display.

And this Christmas **540 discounted** tickets to Wandsworth Council's family pantomime *The Little Mermaid* will be available to people on a range of benefits, care-experienced individuals, asylum seekers and refugees. The show runs from December 14-15 and from December 19-22.

For details visit [wandsworthpanto.com/access-for-all](http://wandsworthpanto.com/access-for-all).



Visit [wandsworth.gov.uk/access-for-all](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/access-for-all)





## Parks praise

■ Wandsworth has risen from 21st to eighth place in the Good Parks for London report.

The report by Parks for London aims to improve and celebrate the capital's park services. Wandsworth scored highly for public satisfaction, collaboration, health, fitness and wellbeing and supporting nature.

It was particularly praised for its Citizen Science projects, working with local people to help protect biodiversity, including amphibian and bat surveys.

This included volunteers searching for amphibians by torchlight around ponds, and using bat detectors to identify which bats are flying where on Wandsworth and Tooting Commons.

We are committed to maintaining and improving all the borough's parks and creating new ones, including pocket parks and the new Springfield Park, which is due to formally open in the spring.



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Call the 24 hour freephone on 0800 389 7921  
or email: [stopsmoking.team@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:stopsmoking.team@wandsworth.gov.uk)  
visit: [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/stopsmoking](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/stopsmoking)





# Wandsworth's Decade of Renewal

**Our Decade of Renewal means tired infrastructure will be repaired and much-needed local facilities will be built.**

As part of our vision to make Wandsworth fairer, we're using funds collected from property developers for these improvements.



We are investing £100m over the next ten years to improve roads and pavements, with at least 66 roads and 50 pavements expected to be completed by the end of this financial year.

The new Roehampton Family Hub is one of the first major improvements promised as part of the Alton Renewal Plan. It will help children and families get a better start, and improve their future, by providing easy access to services at times that meet their needs.

Services include mental health and midwifery services, the Citizens Advice Bureau, domestic abuse support, the Rackets Cubed social supermarket and English and digital skills sessions.

Go along weekdays from 9am-5pm to 166 Roehampton Lane.

St George's Primary School in Battersea will expand into a new purpose-built school building from 2026 to increase capacity, including for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The building, which will be paid for by property developers, will include a new flexible community space.



# Transforming Falcon Road Bridge

Thanks to everyone who helped us choose a winning design for the route underneath Falcon Road rail bridge in Clapham Junction.

The council and London Festival of Architecture ran a design competition, and the public were asked to share their thoughts on seven shortlisted designs. The winner will be announced this month based on practicality of delivery in 2025.

Council Leader Simon Hogg said: "Improvements to this bridge are long overdue so I'm delighted we can finally give it some attention with a bright makeover. As part of our Decade of Renewal, these works will be paid for by property developers, helping to make this critical route better and safer for everyone."



The route under Falcon Road rail bridge



Design A



Design D



Design B



Design E



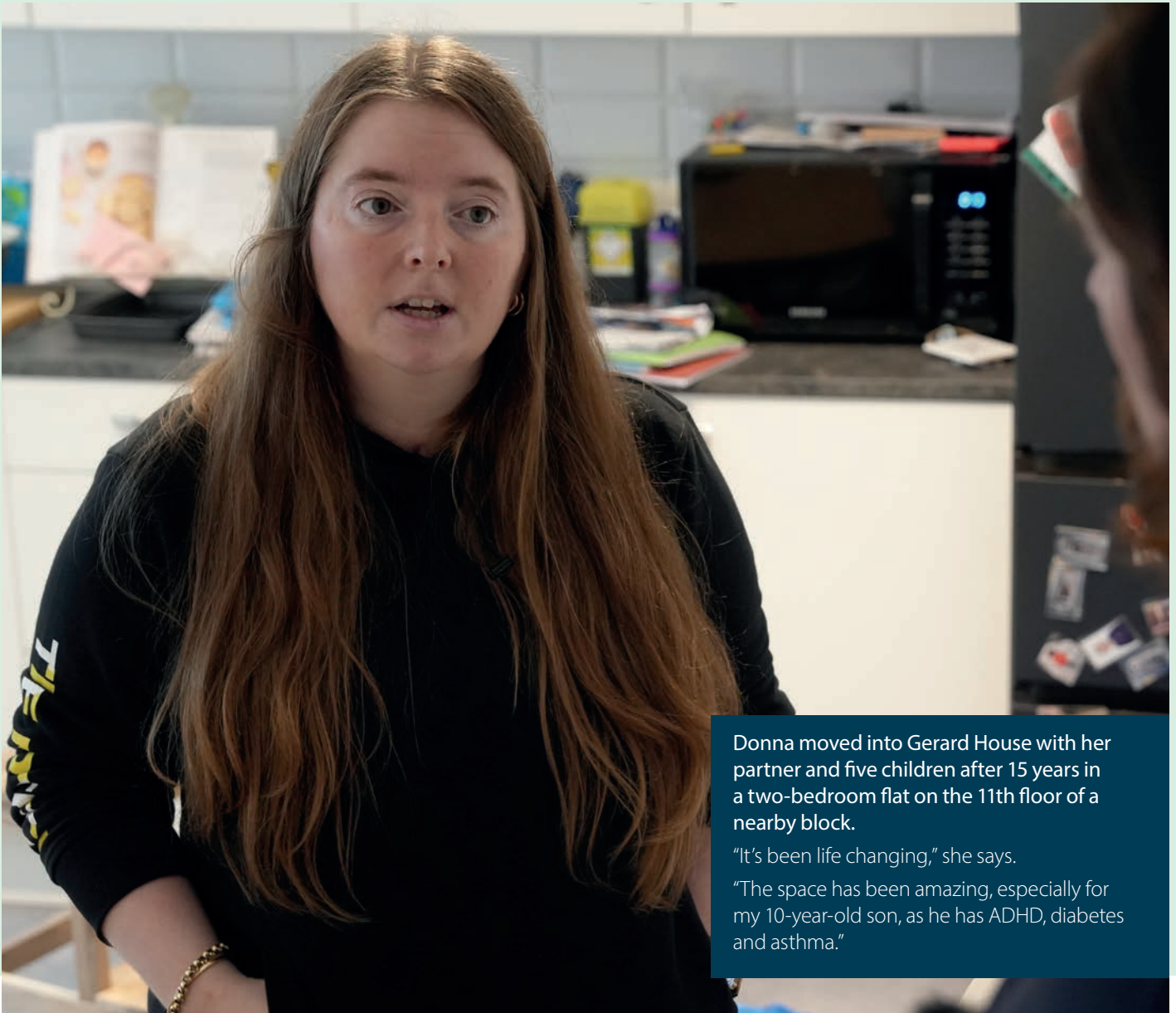
Design C



Design F



Design G



Donna moved into Gerard House with her partner and five children after 15 years in a two-bedroom flat on the 11th floor of a nearby block.

"It's been life changing," she says.

"The space has been amazing, especially for my 10-year-old son, as he has ADHD, diabetes and asthma."

## New homes are changing lives

**We believe everyone should be able to live in a safe and secure home, so we are building 1,000 new, quality council homes.**

Cabinet Member for Housing, Aydin Dikerdem, said: "Every single home we build like this is another family off council waiting lists and into secure tenancies. That is why our Homes for Wandsworth programme is so ambitious and is delivering high-quality homes that we all can be proud of."

Work has finished at the latest development as part of Homes for Wandsworth and people have started moving in.

Gerard House, Roehampton, provides 14 three and four-bed homes, including two for wheelchair users, with new landscaping and a play area.

Some of its new residents tell Brightside their story.



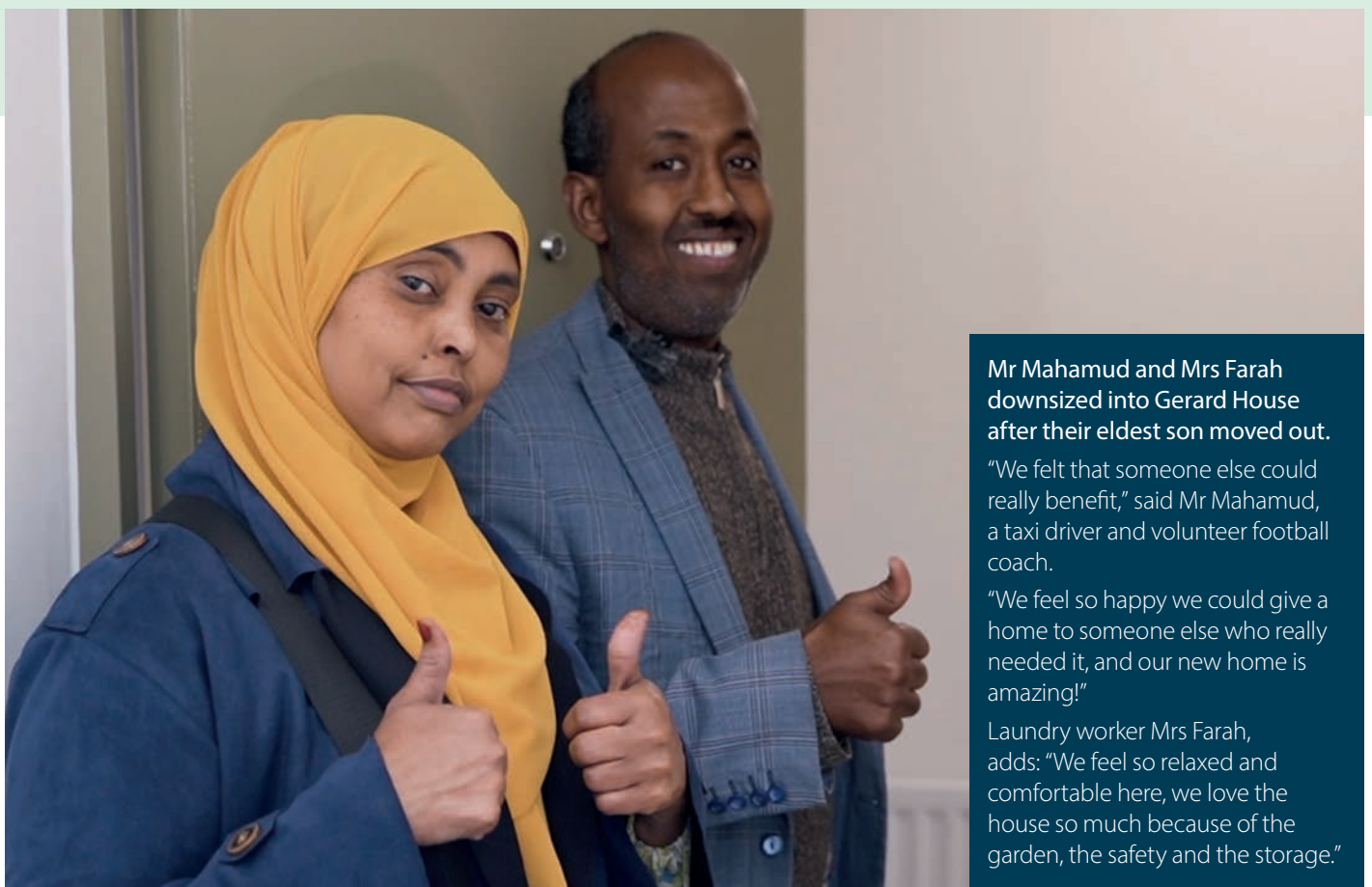


April moved from a one-bedroom property on the sixth floor of a nearby block. The mum-of-three now has her own bedroom, whereas before she shared the living room with her two daughters, while her autistic son slept in the bedroom to allow him space.

"With four of us in such a small space, life was very difficult. I feel a lot calmer now because I've got my own space.

"As a parent I was continually refereeing my children but now I can watch them play and it's lovely.

"They can have friends over and I can finally host a birthday party, so it's great for them socially. I'm so happy to be in a place where my children can thrive now."



**Mr Mahamud and Mrs Farah downsized into Gerard House after their eldest son moved out.**

"We felt that someone else could really benefit," said Mr Mahamud, a taxi driver and volunteer football coach.

"We feel so happy we could give a home to someone else who really needed it, and our new home is amazing!"

Laundry worker Mrs Farah, adds: "We feel so relaxed and comfortable here, we love the house so much because of the garden, the safety and the storage."

# Delivering our Cleaner Borough Plan

Residents continue to benefit from further investment and improvement to rubbish and recycling collection services.

- Guaranteed weekly rubbish and recycling collections.
- 16 per cent reduction in fly-tipping thanks to our popular Mega Skips.
- Food waste collections for eligible households across the borough.
- Free recycling sacks and food waste caddy liners.
- New bins, better signage and improved communications on housing.
- Introduction of new environmentally friendly rubbish and recycling trucks.

In partnership with the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, we are also knocking on doors across the borough to encourage residents to recycle everything they can, including food waste.

## Flats food waste recycling

The new collection service to recycle food waste is being rolled out to residents in blocks of flats, including on housing estates, from this month (December).

We will write to residents in blocks of flats with further information before they receive the new service so they know what to expect.

Everyone will receive a starter pack with a small indoor caddy for the kitchen, a roll of liners and a leaflet explaining how to use the service. Each block will have a secure outdoor communal food waste bin.



We are bringing our food waste recycling service to all flats over the coming weeks and months.

**Our Cleaner Borough** Working together for a cleaner Wandsworth



Young entrepreneurs set up a stand selling homemade soaps and bakes next to one of our Mega Skips in Dents Road. The money went to improving facilities at their school.

Find out your nearest Mega Skip at [wandsworth.gov.uk/mega-skip-days](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/mega-skip-days)

**MEGA  
SKIP DAYS**

# Christmas tree recycling is back



To recycle your real Christmas tree before January 6, bring it to one of the following drop-off points from Boxing Day.

**Acanthus Road**, Battersea, parking bays at the end of the road next to Grayshott playground, SW11 5TY

**Battersea Park**, Albert Bridge Car Park, Albert Bridge Road, SW11 4NU

**Battersea Park**, Chelsea Gate Car Park, Carriage Drive North, SW11 4NJ

**Tooting Common**, Dr Johnson Car Park, SW17 8JU

**Tooting Leisure Centre Car Park**, Greaves Place, SW17 0NE

**Nuffield Health Car Park**, Burr Road, Wandsworth, SW18 4SQ

**Household Waste and Recycling Centre**, Smugglers Way, Wandsworth. Book and appointment at [wrwa.gov.uk](http://wrwa.gov.uk)

Using the collection service from January 6? Here's some handy tips

- Put out your real Christmas tree on your usual collection day next to your rubbish and recycling bags.
- If you have no front garden put your tree on the pavement just outside your front door, taking care not to block where people walk.
- If you live in a block of flats, leave your tree near to your rubbish and recycling bins store, making sure it does not block access to the bins.
- We use a different vehicle to collect real Christmas trees, so don't worry if it's not collected at the same time as your rubbish and recycling.

There's even more drop-off points available between Christmas and New Year, and our household collection returns from January 6.

“We're looking forward to bringing back our real Christmas tree collection service in 2024, making it easier than ever to sustainably dispose of your tree”



Cabinet member for Environment Judi Gasser

## Christmas rubbish and recycling dates

Over Christmas and New Year, household rubbish and recycling collection dates will be a day later.

Normal Collection Day	Revised Collection Day
Monday 23 December	No change
Tuesday 24 December	No change
Wednesday 25 December	Thursday 26 December
Thursday 26 December	Friday 27 December
Friday 27 December	Saturday 28 December
Monday 30 January	No change
Tuesday 31 January	No change
Wednesday 1 January	Thursday 2 January
Thursday 2 January	Friday 3 January
Friday 3 January	Saturday 4 January
<b>Return to normal</b>	<b>Monday 6 January</b>

Christmas tree collections from **Monday 6 January**

# Better transport

Wandsworth is committed to improving options for cyclists, pedestrians and other road users, and to making our roads safer for everyone.



The borough's network of cycle routes is to expand. Six new routes are on their way following extensive public consultation and will connect popular locations via back roads. The public will be asked for their views on the details of the routes to ensure they are designed by residents, for residents. **The consultation goes live in the new year – keep an eye on [wandsworth.gov.uk/consultations](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/consultations).**

The newest community cargo bike has launched in Roehampton, bringing the number of hireable cargo bikes in the borough to five. The picture shows Chantelle's Community Kitchen, one of the local organisations which has joined the scheme.

Peddle My Wheels also provides a cost-effective bike hire scheme for Wandsworth residents where you can rent bikes for children or adults, as well as electric, foldable, or cargo bikes for a few weeks or months, with the options to buy the bike at the end. Search 'Active Travel' on our website.

Wandsworth Council cycle instructors have been out and about handing out free lights to cyclists to help keep them safe during the winter months. The picture shows instructor David Lloyd on Putney Bridge fitting a set of free lights for a cyclist whose batteries had just run out. **Find out about free cycle training and other support for cyclists at [wandsworth.gov.uk/cycle](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/cycle)**







# Food, friendship and fun at Tooting Community Kitchen

■ Tooting Community Kitchen has grown dramatically since its launch in 2018 with a handful of volunteers outside Tooting Market on a Saturday night sharing hot food and drinks for anyone in need.

The practical and emotional support helps hundreds of community members each year, highlights team leader Amanda Greetham, pointing out “sometimes this is the only hot meal they can get through the week”.

Volunteer Noreen Arshad adds: “It works both ways, as we also learn from our interactions with the people who come here. I get the reward of contributing something to the community.” Find out more at [www.tck.org.uk](http://www.tck.org.uk)

**The council supports groups across the borough as part of its work to end food insecurity. Find out about other sources of help at [wandsworth.gov.uk/cost-of-living-food](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/cost-of-living-food)**

As one of Wandsworth Mayor Sana Jafri’s three chosen charities for the year, Tooting Community Kitchen is supported alongside Homestart Wandsworth and Rackets Cubed.

Still serving the homeless and vulnerable freshly prepared hot meals at twice-weekly stalls outside Tooting Islamic Centre in Upper Tooting Road, the charity has expanded to include a food bank, soup kitchen, and weekly community activities including arts and crafts, games, singing and dancing.

When trained chef Darren first came to Tooting Community Kitchen, he was homeless and struggling. Seeing a leaflet for free food was a turning point, and the start of a six-year journey with the charity.

“I don’t know where I’d be without it,” says Darren, 52, who now cooks up a storm for one of Tooting Community Kitchen’s weekly lunchtime clubs. “One day I said I’d love to come and volunteer, and it has given me purpose. It keeps me going.”

With an open door for those in need to come along, Tooting Community Kitchen has recently shared workshops focused on the cost of living and cooking on a budget.



Elaine, who attends the community club, said: “It’s really helped coming here because I’m not on my own. It can just creep up on you, so coming somewhere like this really helps.”



## The final cut: The man who cut Wandsworth's hair for 45 years

■ Barber Ghalghelmy Aziz is hanging up his scissors after almost five decades in the borough.

Moroccan-born Mr Aziz – who arrived in London in 1969 – has had thousands of clients since he opened his first shop in the 70's but he says he considers them family before anything else. He had been at his current location, Kouta's Barbers located in West Hill, for the past 20 years and a stone's throw away for 25 years before that.

Mr Aziz told Brightside: "I've still got quite a few old clients that still come here for haircuts.

"Some moved far away and came to say goodbye but, in the end, they changed their minds and started coming here again."

When some of his clients found out he was retiring they came to hug and kiss him – some even crying at the end of an era.

Mr Aziz has seen changes not just to the community he has served for so many years but to the haircuts people ask for.

From longer styles like shags and mullets in the 70's and 80's inspired by stars like David Bowie, Mick Jagger and Rod Stewart to the shorter buzzcuts and fades of today.

With plans to take it easy and relax in his retirement at his home in Chessington his final message to all his former clients was: "I love them all and will live with good memories of those people."

# First Youth Mayor team promises voice for young people

■ The election of the first ever Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor in Wandsworth this year marked a landmark moment.

It highlights a commitment to ensuring that young people's voices are heard, recognised and given space and influence.

For 18-year-old Millie Quinn, being elected as Youth Mayor is "just the start of young people's perspectives being heard".

The Year 13 student – who is studying for A-levels in politics, sociology and history – is determined to use the platform to forge strong bonds between leaders within the council, the diverse communities that make up borough of Wandsworth, and young people.

"The leaders I've met have been genuinely interested in our thoughts," said Millie, who is also involved with youth charities including Safer London, and a member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Youth Affairs.

"Young people have so many amazing thoughts and different things to say and this has shown there is an interest in youth politics in the borough."

With interests including sexual violence, social justice and poor health among young people, Millie has been able to share perspectives with a cross-section of the community.

Along with Deputy Youth Mayor, Favour Oniri, the duo had been involved with Wandsworth's 30-strong Youth Council before being elected to their new roles in May through a competitive ballot process.

The goal is to raise awareness of young people's issues and upskill them to advocate for positive changes within the community, with projects such as a financial literacy event already making a difference.

Heading to events including the launch of the Wandsworth Arts Fringe and the green-focused Hazelfest in June have cemented the roles as a crucial part of community life.

Meanwhile, visits to charitable organisations including Chantelle's Kitchen, as well as events organised by Balham and Tooting Community Association, and the launch of the new Roehampton Family Hub, have given a platform to the young people. First-year politics and international relations university student Favour, 18, adds: "It's about sharing opportunities and really helps people



to connect with their borough and learn about the real struggles that people face in the world around us."

Like Wandsworth's Mayor Sana Jafri, both Millie and Favour have handpicked charities to support during their time in office as Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor.

Wandsworth Welcomes Refugees and Battersea-based Sound Minds, which supports people with mental health challenges through the arts and music, are the young leaders' chosen charities.

"It's a privilege to be able to have such a role and I hope that people that look like me, ethnically and gender-wise, can take inspiration in furthering their platforms and reaching out to the world around them," adds Favour, who has a particular interest in young people's mental health, and stronger and safer communities.



Wandsworth's first ever Youth Mayor, Millie

Find out more on Instagram @wbcyouthcouncil or email Wandsworth Youth Council Facilitator Keziah Gordon at [Keziah.gordon@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:Keziah.gordon@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk)



Simon Hogg addresses local concerns in Putney

# Community voices

Putney and Battersea residents had the opportunity to share thoughts about their area at the recent community drop-in events in October and November.

They were able to make suggestions, raise issues, get advice and speak to the Leader of the Council Simon Hogg, local MP Fleur Anderson, the police and senior council officers.



The regular events are held in the heart of local communities. Find out about upcoming events at [wandsworth.gov.uk/here-to-listen](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/here-to-listen)



Putney and Battersea residents share their thoughts on potential improvements.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

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# Meet our local heroes

**The Wandsworth Civic Awards give the council and local residents a chance to honour and thank unsung heroes who work tirelessly to help others – often without any recognition.**

The 2024 winners were presented with their awards at a ceremony at the Wandsworth Civic Suite by Wandsworth Mayor Sana Jafri. She said: "The Wandsworth Civic Awards are the council's highest honour and they are given to truly outstanding citizens. Our winners' hard work and selfless dedication to helping those around them help make Wandsworth the fantastic, caring, inclusive borough it is."

Two special awards were awarded by the Wandsworth Youth Mayor in recognition of young people under the age of 25 who have made a positive contribution to Wandsworth.

## Jeanne Rathbone

Jeanne has worked tirelessly to make sure the important women in Battersea's past are remembered. In 2022 she published her book *Inspirational Women of Battersea* and has been the force behind heritage plaques celebrating notable local women. Jeanne also voluntarily gives walks and talks throughout the year to help people learn more about their area.

## Arshad Daud

As chair of his local mosque, Arshad helps the local Muslim community and works to break down barriers through inclusive events for all local people. He is chair of the Balham and Tooting Community Association and provides a platform for local organisations to come together to help the community and celebrate local heroes. And as a member of the Wandsworth Cost of Living Commission he ensures local Muslims, and all local residents, get their voice heard.

## Florence Boulton

At 92 Florence is still a force in her community, visiting schools to give living history lessons about life in London during World War Two and always on hand to help members of St Paul's Church and her neighbours. Florence was a captain in the guides for many years, part of Neighbourhood Watch and an integral member of the British Legion.



## Sahar Beg

Sahar is the founder and driving force behind the Tooting Community Kitchen which provides freshly-prepared hot meals to those who need them twice a week and runs a foodbank, a home delivery service and outreach programmes to refugee centres, hospitals and shelters. As well as food, the team, made up entirely of volunteers, provides essentials like toiletries, winter packs and clothing.

## Chantelle Bent

Chantelle is the founder of Chantelle's Community Kitchen. Over the course of a year Chantelle has provided more than 14,000 free meals to her local community. Homemade nutritious meals are served every Tuesday and on Friday guests can enjoy a sit down lunch and a chat at a brunch café, where they can also find out about local services. Everyone is welcome and treated equally.

## Nick Crutchley

Nick has spent ten years doing a wide variety of tasks behind the scenes to help keep Citizens Advice Wandsworth running smoothly. He provides IT support, carries out odd jobs and was essential to enable Citizens Advice to continue to provide help during the pandemic. And he has been crucial in recruiting, inducting and supporting more volunteers.

## The Wandsworth Youth Award winners are Chapman Shum

Born blind and facing multiple challenges including autism and learning disability, He is a highly accomplished pianist and uses his platform to support meaningful causes, events and community projects. He is a dedicated fundraiser for Wandsworth-based charity the Amber Trust which supports music education for visually impaired and disadvantaged children, is a volunteer pianist at Queen Mary's Hospital and has taken part in the Wandsworth Arts Fringe.

## Mariam Mohsin

Mariam is an RAF Air Cadet Force Adult Volunteer. She helps make sure all the activities delivered by the Air Cadets are as inclusive as possible. Mariam is also the STEM Officer for London responsible for delivering science, technology, engineering and maths activities, and runs outdoor activities including trekking, paddle sports, indoor bouldering and rock climbing activities, as well as regular Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions.

Find out more at [wandsworth.gov.uk/civicawards](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/civicawards)



Chapman Shum receives his award from the Youth Mayor Millie Quinn



Music was provided by Ark Putney Academy

# Inclusive ballet school in spotlight for Black History 365

■ Pointe Black ballet school celebrated the Windrush generation in an inclusive showcase developed for Wandsworth Council's Black History 365 programme.



Battersea-based Pointe Black ballet school has grown dramatically since its launch in 2021, and its dancers performed an immersive stage show delving into the Windrush story, as part of Black History Month.

As a little girl, Ruth Essel loved to dance. Every spare moment was spent learning ballet moves and dreaming of the stage.

But it was a bittersweet journey for the young dancer, as "experiences of discrimination, microaggressions and overt racism" chipped at her dream.

Determined no dancer should ever feel excluded, lifelong Wandsworth resident Ruth founded the inclusive ballet school where "anyone from the community could come into a safe space as themselves, with no restrictions on size or age".

"The story is about celebrating the monumental achievements of our predecessors as we take on the characters of all the aunties, parents and grandparents who came from Caribbean countries to the UK after the Second World War," explains Ruth, who wrote and produced the show.

"It's so important we bring context and expression to the movements, as dance comes from a feeling, not from being statues at a studio barre."

Pointe Black's dance showcase titled *Our Windrush Story* is one of Wandsworth Council's Cultural Commissions, celebrating incredible creative projects through the council's year-long Black History 365 programme. Each of the eight commissions has been given cash backing by the council to develop and deliver their ideas, with the projects set to launch over the coming year.

For Ruth – whose ballet school attracts dancers from across Wandsworth and as far afield as Uxbridge, Leytonstone and Caterham – developing a deeper understanding of Black culture and heritage is a crucial part of the artistic process.



With her own Jamaican and Ghanaian background, Ruth explains that "you didn't see any forms of representation in the UK in the late 90's and early noughties".

Fast forward to today and it is "a new world" despite the challenges that remain, she adds.

As a trained psychologist, positive affirmations and bolstering social equity are as important for Ruth as teaching traditional ballet technique.

With dancers ranging in age from 18 months to 63 years, that can take different forms.

"The older ballerinas are often living out a childhood dream, or they've done classes as a child or teenager and someone has told them their body isn't quite right, so they are trying to heal their inner child," points out Ruth.

"With the younger ballerinas, we notice they and their families are really looking for activities specifically for our community, and wanting to boost the Black pound."

Remembering the sacrifices her own mum Sandra made to pay for dance classes, 31-year-old Ruth runs a scholarship scheme for dancers needing support.

"That will never change," vows Ruth, a former pupil at Graveney School in Tooting and St Cecilia's School in Southfields.

As Wandsworth gears up to become The Mayor of London's London Borough of Culture 2025, the borough is celebrating Black History 365 with an ambitious programme of community-focused, cultural, arts and heritage-based activities and events.

**Find out what's still to come at [wandsworthart.com/black-history-365-cultural-commissions-2025](https://www.wandsworthart.com/black-history-365-cultural-commissions-2025).**



#lovetofoster

# Our Wandsworth children need you



Now  
recruiting all  
types of carers  
**could this be  
you?**

## Are you ready to start your fostering journey?

**There are many ways for you to foster.**  
Talk to us today and find out more about the  
different fostering options in Wandsworth.



email: [fosteringrecruitment@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:fosteringrecruitment@wandsworth.gov.uk)

visit: [wandsworth.gov.uk/fostering](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fostering)

call: 0808 175 3327





# Join our walks

## Showing solidarity with women and girls

Local people joined two walks last month to show their support for White Ribbon Day, held to raise awareness globally of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

This year the theme was how men can hold themselves accountable and change the culture that leads to abuse, and men and women joined the Roehampton White Ribbon Torch Parade, organised by the SW15 Women's Network, and the Walk to End VAWG in Clapham Junction.

Wandsworth Council has doubled investment into domestic abuse support and initiatives include a community forum to bring together organisations and individuals.

The council runs the Safe Space Clapham Junction in partnership with the police, giving women somewhere safe to go late on Friday nights if they need support or advice, and the Wandsworth One Stop Shops are weekly drop-ins in Battersea and Roehampton offering free, discrete support.

Find more support at [wandsworth.gov.uk/vawg](http://wandsworth.gov.uk/vawg)



Cabinet Member Graeme Henderson speaking at the event.

## Domestic Abuse

Are you isolated at home and feeling unsafe?

Are you frightened of your partner or a family member?

Are you worried that someone you know is experiencing abuse?

## There are local services here to help you

Come and get **FREE** information, support and legal advice, drop into our **One Stop Shop** - no appointment is needed.

### St Mark's

Battersea Rise, SW11 1EJ,  
(entrance on Boutflower Road)

Open every **Monday 10am-12pm**  
(excluding Bank Holidays)

### The Family Hub

166 Roehampton Lane,  
Roehampton, SW15 4HR

Open every **Wednesday**,  
10am-12.30pm



# WHAT'S ON?

## HeART of Christmas

Until January 4, 12noon-8pm daily

A magical immersive light experience from the Nine Elms Arts Ministry at art'otel created by conceptual artist Alexa Muen. As well as the exhibition, there will be a series of free events including Christmas craft workshops and meet the artist sessions. Admission is free.

[nineelmsartsministry.org/projects/heart-of-christmas-2024](https://nineelmsartsministry.org/projects/heart-of-christmas-2024)

## Nature Trails

Explore Wandsworth's parks with this immersive audio experience. As you walk learn the rich history, vibrant ecology, and hidden stories of King George's Park, Wandsworth Park, Wandsworth Common, Battersea Park, and Tooting Commons.

[www.pod1.co/enable](http://www.pod1.co/enable)



## Christmas Day Lunch for the Elderly

The Rotary Club of Battersea holds a Christmas Day lunch in a marquee in Battersea Park for older people who would otherwise be alone. It is completely free for guests, so donations are welcome.

[Rotarychristmasday.org](http://Rotarychristmasday.org)

## Christmas Craft Fair

December 7, 10am-4pm

Handmade Christmas gifts and free activities for children. Just turn up.

Battersea Library, Lavender Hill

## Spanish Conversation Group

December 10, 10am-11am

Improve your Spanish by chatting to others. No need to book.

Battersea park Library, Battersea Park Road

## Health Bus

December 7, 11.30am-4pm

The bus will be at the CEN Christmas event. Chat with one of our health experts who will give you advice and guidance on having a healthier lifestyle.

Doddington Estate, Battersea Park Road

## Wandsworth Older People's Forum Christmas Party

December 10, 2pm

Anchor Church Centre, Garratt Lane

Have fun and out more about the Forum, including volunteer vacancies.

All welcome but please email [syebat@hotmail.com](mailto:syebat@hotmail.com)



## Christmas Market

December 6-8, 10am-4pm

December 13-15, 10am-4pm

December 16-22, 10am-5.30pm

Gifts, street food, Santa and more.

Tooting Market, Totterdown Street

## Christmas Coffee Morning and Table Top Sale

December 7, 10.30am-Noon

Gifts, cards, books, puzzles, bric a brac, toys and refreshments. Free entry

Earlsfield Baptist Church, Magdalen Road (opposite Sainsburys)

## Festive Fair in the Square

December 7, 12noon-4pm

Workshops, foodstalls, raffle, sport and more. Opened by the Wandsworth Youth Mayor, Millie Quinn

Cromwell Hub, Doddington and Rollo Roof Garden and Square, Charlotte Despard Avenue, SW11 5HW

## Wandsworth Symphony Orchestra Christmas Concert

December 8, 3.30pm-5.30pm

Classic carols and symphonic favourites.

Wandsworth Civic Suite

Search Wandsworth Symphony Orchestra on Eventbrite



## Santa and Sven

December 13-21

Family-friendly Christmas Show.

Theatre 503, Battersea Park Road

[theatre503.com/whats-on/santa-and-sven](http://theatre503.com/whats-on/santa-and-sven)

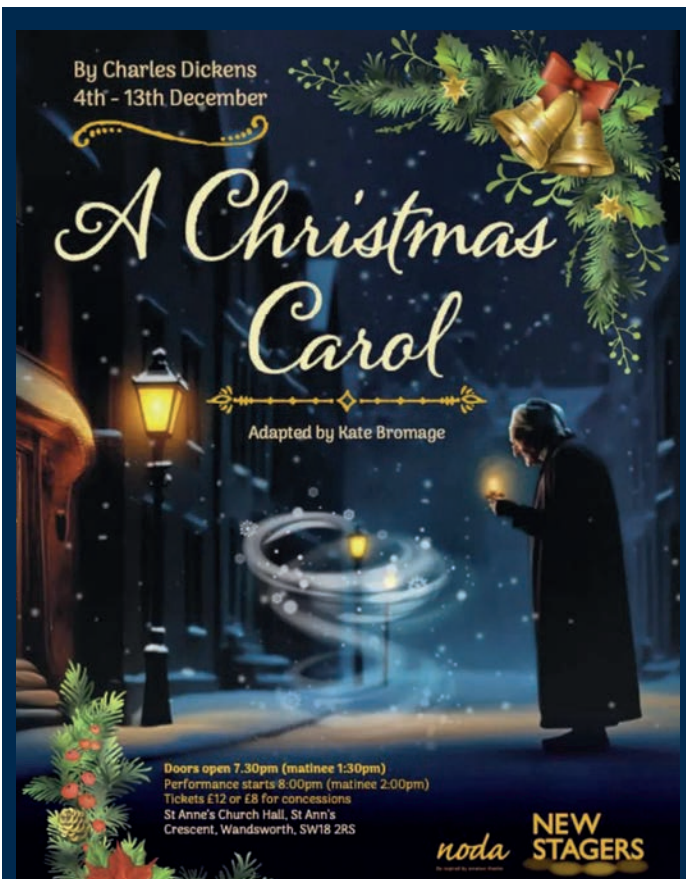


## Gig Band Christmas Concert

December 13

Young musicians present a festive concert  
World Heart Beat, Embassy Gardens,  
Nine Elms

[worldheartbeat.org/whats-on](http://worldheartbeat.org/whats-on)



## A Christmas Carol

December 4-5, 7, 12-13

Ebenezer Scrooge is not a fan of Christmas, but visits from the ghosts of his past make him think again. A classic retelling of the Dickens story.

St Anne's Church Hall, Wandsworth

[Newstagers.co.uk/a-christmas-carol](http://Newstagers.co.uk/a-christmas-carol)

## Wild Weekends

December 14, 10am-11.30am

Lots of fun activities for the whole family. No booking necessary

Wandsworth Town Library, Courthouse Way

## It's a Wonderful Life

December 17-21

Retelling of the classic Christmas story at the Putney Arts Theatre

[putneyartstheatre.org.uk/whatson](http://putneyartstheatre.org.uk/whatson)

## Christmas Sip and Spin

December 16-20

Have a go at throwing on the pottery wheel or hand-building a pot with the help of a professional instructor, while sipping on a festive drink of your choice which you bring yourself.

Spaces are limited so book as soon as possible.

Putney School of Art and Design

[bit.ly/christmassipspin](http://bit.ly/christmassipspin)





### Sparkle Christmas Extravaganza

December 17, 2.30pm-5.30pm

Afternoon tea, intergenerational craft, a dance show from Lucie Benson School of Dance and the fairy-lit carol lorry.

St Stephen's Church, Manfred Road, Putney

All welcome but email [emma@stmikes-ststeves.org.uk](mailto:emma@stmikes-ststeves.org.uk).

### Santa's Grotto

Until December 24

Visit the man himself at Battersea Arts Centre. Book in advance

[bac.org.uk/whats-on/santas-grotto-2024](http://bac.org.uk/whats-on/santas-grotto-2024)



### South Asian Playreading Group

Each session reads and discusses a different play from a writer of South Asian heritage. New members welcome – no theatre experience necessary.

[taratheatre.com/whats-on/south-asian-playreading-group](http://taratheatre.com/whats-on/south-asian-playreading-group)

## Doing it online

Using our website helps keep your council tax bills low

### Report a waste problem

wandsworth.gov.uk/waste

### Request a housing repair

wandsworth.gov.uk/housingonline

### Search planning applications

wandsworth.gov.uk/planningregister

### Report a street problem

wandsworth.gov.uk/streets

### Apply for a school place

eadmissions.org.uk

### Book an MOT

wandsworth.gov.uk/MOT

### Report noise and nuisances

wandsworth.gov.uk/noise

### Apply or renew a parking permit

wandsworth.gov.uk/parkingpermits

### Report graffiti for removal

wandsworth.gov.uk/graffiti

### Report an abandoned vehicle

wandsworth.gov.uk/abandonedvehicles

### Tell us if you are moving in or out of Wandsworth

wandsworth.gov.uk/MIMO

### Enquire about your housing options

wandsworth.gov.uk/housingoptions

## Pay it online

It's now easier to pay online at [wandsworth.gov.uk/payments](https://wandsworth.gov.uk/payments)

### Pay your council tax

wandsworth.gov.uk/paycounciltax

### Pay a parking fine

wandsworth.gov.uk/parking/payment

### Pay your rent

wandsworth.gov.uk/rents

### Pay for a marriage or civil partnership ceremony

wandsworth.gov.uk/ceremonypayment

### Pay your business rates

wandsworth.gov.uk/paybusinessrates

### Pay a waste or littering penalty

wandsworth.gov.uk/waste-enforcement

## Talk to us online

weekly e-newsletter

[wandsworth.gov.uk/enews](https://wandsworth.gov.uk/enews)



[facebook.com/wandsworth.council](https://facebook.com/wandsworth.council)



@wandbc



[instagram.com/wandsworth\\_council](https://instagram.com/wandsworth_council)

## Other contacts at the council

### Adult Social Services

(020) 8871 7707

### Births, Deaths, Marriages and Voting Hotline

(020) 8871 6120

### Early Years and Childcare Hotline including Family Information Service and After School and Holiday Play Centre bookings

(020) 8871 7899

### Environmental Services including noise, pest control, private housing and licensing

(020) 8871 6127

### Finance Hotline including benefits, council tax, rents and business rates

(020) 8871 8081

### Housing Hotline including housing management and repairs, service charges, home ownership, homelessness and housing advice

(020) 8871 6161

### Parking and Streets Hotline including concessionary travel, blue badges, MOTs, highways and skip licensing and bay suspensions

(020) 8871 8871

### Planning and Building Control hotline including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), land searches and street naming and numbering

(020) 8871 7620

### Schools and Admissions

(020) 8871 7316

### Waste Hotline including rubbish, recycling and litter

(020) 8871 8558

## My Account

Create an account and you will only have to sign in once to access the main council services.

[wandsworth.gov.uk/myaccount](https://wandsworth.gov.uk/myaccount)



Helping you do the right thing with your recycling

Christmas tree  
collections from  
**Monday 6  
January**

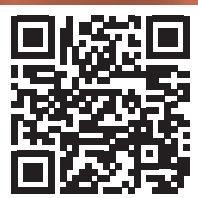
**Put your real Christmas  
tree out for collection**  
on your usual collection day from  
**Monday 6 January 2025**

Your tree will be collected on the same day as your rubbish and recycling, but in a different vehicle.

Want to recycle your real Christmas tree before 6 January?  
Visit a drop-off point from 26 December.

#### Christmas & New Year collection dates

Don't forget your rubbish and recycling collection day changes over Christmas due to bank holidays. It will be a day later than normal. Read more on page 15.



[wandsworth.gov.uk/  
christmas-tree-recycling](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/christmas-tree-recycling)

