In just over a year’s time, in April 2018, the clients and staff of the High Path Community Resource Centre will be moving into a new centre about 10 minutes’ walk away in Leyton Road, off Merton High Street. High Path Centre will then be knocked down to make way for a new secondary school. Turn to pages 4 & 5 to find out more.
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On the 20th October a reunion was held at High Path for the former clients and staff of the old Weir Road Centre. It’s been 8 years since the Employment Assessment Centre at Weir Road closed and so the reunion was a great chance for old friends and colleagues to get back together and catch up well with one another. There were many people who hadn’t seen each other during the whole of those 8 years and so to finally get together was very exciting and great fun! There were lots of old photos to look through and a slide show of pictures and embarrassing videos, some of which dated as far back as 1988!

Merrill Walls, who attended Weir Road Centre for over 16 years, said: “It was a very enjoyable morning and so nice to share lots of happy memories with my old friends. It was lovely to see all the old staff again too.”

Kathleen McLeod, former assistant manager of Weir Road Centre, said: “Thank you all for a very enjoyable event, it was great to see everyone, a brilliant idea, although looking at the pictures and films make us realise how some of us have aged!”
The clients and staff of High Path Centre will be moving into a newly refurbished centre in the spring of 2018. The centre will be in Leyton Road, near Sainsbury’s off Merton High Street, just around the corner from High Path and will replace the offices which are currently on the site.

The one storey building in Leyton Road will be fully refurbished and well equipped for the running of a good variety of sessions and activities and will have a sensory room, computer room and a training kitchen. Just as it has been with High Path Centre, the new centre will also be able to welcome other community groups to make good use of the space and its facilities.

The current clients of High Path Centre will be involved in the design and development of the new centre on Leyton Road, and have been assured that it will be of a quality equal to or better than their current centre.

As many of you will already know, the current site of the High Path Centre is on part of an area of land which the Council has chosen to be used for a new secondary school, to be run by the Harris Foundation, which should be open for its first intake of pupils in September 2020.
The site on which High Path Centre has stood for the last 20 years has an interesting history and has already been put to a variety of different uses. In the 1750s the site became part of the grounds of a large house called Merton Place. Lord Nelson and Emma Hamilton bought it in 1802 and it was from this house that Nelson set out for what would be his final battle: The Battle of Trafalgar.

Merton Place was demolished in 1823 after which time the land was largely used for farming and there were several small cottages or farm buildings directly on the site where the High Path Centre would later be built. By 1913 a railway was running on what is now the A24 Merantun Way. In the 1950s there was a toy factory on the site, probably an expansion of the huge Tri-ang toy manufacturing plant across Merantun Way in Morden Road, which had opened in the 1920s. In the late 1980s a tyre storage was on the site which caught fire in 1991. Then in 1996 the High Path Community Resource Centre was built as it is today.

With plans for the new secondary school to be opened in 2020, and the redevelopment of the High Path estate over the next few years, the fascinating evolution of the area continues.
Glen left school in 1973 and has been working in a variety of jobs over the past 40 years. Glen is a practical sort of chap who enjoys working in the open air, so the many jobs that he has had over that period tend to reflect this. Glen lives independently in Mitcham with his dog Lassie. Glen has no need of social work input, but does need regular assistance filling in forms, job applications etc.

Some of the roles Glen has tried since being supported by the Merton Employment Team have been Supermarket Trolley Porter, Delivery Driver’s Mate, Car Park Attendant, Park Litter Picker and restaurant Kitchen Porter.

Currently Glen works as a Litter Picker/Landscaper for 20 hours per week in a local retail park. Glen continues to receive low level support from The Merton Employment Team, who helped Glen to find and apply for the job, through their weekly Job Club.

As you will see from the photos Glen works hard keeping the car park area clear of litter and the bins emptied. His employers, North2South Property Maintenance, know how reliable Glen is – turning up 5 days per week, come rain or shine.
Most of the contact Glen now has with his Manager is by telephone, with the occasional site visit to supply the necessary materials and equipment. Glen is trusted to get on with the job in hand. When Glen started working again after a period of unemployment, he received expert help from the Merton Welfare Benefits Team to oversee the paperwork and financial changes. All has now been adjusted and through a combination of wages and benefits, Glen is financially better off, having more money to spend as he chooses, such as on his hobbies and saving towards a future holiday. Glen is very happy earning his own living and being in control of his finances. As you can see, having a learning disability hasn’t stopped Glen making a success of work, which in turn has allowed him to lead a more independent life.

If you feel a ‘Working Life’ is for you, but you are worried that your learning disability could hold you back, why not discuss your work ideas with The Merton Employment Team? Contact details are below.

**Merton Employment Team**
Civic Centre, London Road
Morden, SM4 5DX

Telephone : 0208 274 5735
email: MertonEmploymentTeam@merton.gov.uk
In the middle of Winter here’s a reminder of the colourful Summer enjoyed in the beautiful wild meadow at High Path Centre! The past year has seen Derek and the Community Payback Team continue to transform the garden spaces at High Path. While continuing to tend the allotment and greenhouse with their variety of crops including Scotch bonnet chilies, the team turned their attention to an area of the garden at the side of the centre with these amazing results:

For a couple of weeks the colourful blooms of poppies, cornflowers and daisies made the meadow a beautiful place to sit and relax. As mentioned, the Scotch bonnet chilies have also been a great success this year and were used to make a hot pepper sauce only for the brave!

Many thanks to Derek and the Community Payback Team for the hard work they have put into growing the crops and creating such a pleasant and enjoyable space.
Every Tuesday morning the cooking group at High Path makes the weekly ‘special’ - a meal which is sold in the canteen at lunch time. The group of master chefs is made up of Wayne, Richard, Claire, Anne, Sheila, Marie & Joan, with guidance and supervision from staff member Carol.

The jobs involved include peeling and chopping, mixing ingredients and whisking, and then frying, boiling and roasting. These jobs are swapped between the members of the group week by week, enabling them all to master a range of skills. This good team work definitely seems to be paying off, not only with the results which are delicious, but also with the positive atmosphere in the kitchen which is always lively and very good humoured. Anne said: “I like helping in this group, we have a right laugh!”

The meals go down very well and clients and staff alike look forward to their weekly surprise, enjoying the various culinary creations. Recent specials have included chicken or vegetable curry, spaghetti meatballs, vegetable moussaka, chicken fajita, roast chicken, corned beef hash, tacos and vegetable stew with dumplings.

The special desserts seem to disappear even more quickly than the main courses! These tasty treats have recently included spotted dick, bread & butter pudding, summer fruit crumble, tiramisu and Eton mess. Carol said: “I’m not a chef, get me out of here! The group work hard and support each other. Some weeks I even get to put my feet up!”

The Tuesday cooking group’s blend of hard work and good fun has made their weekly specials the lunch time highlight of the week at High Path Centre. Thanks to all of them for their hard work and delicious dishes.
Dosh has launched a series of factsheets for family carers who manage their relative's money. Managing money for your relative can be an important connection to them, but can also be stressful, worrying and confusing. Dosh has worked with family carers to find out what information they need to help them and written these factsheets based on this work which include information on benefits, mental capacity, planning for the future and checklists for financial health.

**Factsheets for family carers**

**Tips on managing money**

In 2015, Dosh worked with Sheffield Mencap and Gateway on a local project with family carers who support a relative with a learning disability with their money. Many family carers want to support their relative with money, but often find the process complicated, confusing and stressful.

An important part of the project was helping people to plan for the future, for example when their relative moves out of the family home or when they can no longer manage their relative's money themselves.

As a result of our findings, we have created a series of factsheets for family carers who are involved in managing money for a relative.

The factsheets give key information on topics such as benefits and family banking. We hope they will help you better understand your options as a family carer, and to be more confident in supporting your relative with money, now and in the future.

The factsheets can be downloaded from: dosh.org/learn-about-money/factsheets-for-family-carers/
The Paul Strank Charitable Trust has sponsored 6 AFC Wimbledon fans from High Path Centre to attend matches and enjoy a meal once a month for the rest of this season! The fortunate fans are Danny, Richard, Warren, Matthew, Marie & Wayne all of whom have been supporting the club for many years by attending matches and taking part in annual fundraising events with the players. Over this time they have built up great friendships with the club’s staff, management and players alike and really feel like part of the AFC Wimbledon family.

Paul Strank Roofing Ltd is a large roofing company based in Weir Road, Wimbledon, which has over the years grown strong bonds with the local community. In May this year they were nominated for a Merton Community Award in recognition of their dedication to fundraising and their support of many charities and good causes in Merton. Being lifelong supporters of AFC Wimbledon, they also sponsor the club and take great interest in the club’s involvement with the wider community.

Danny, Richard, Warren, Matthew, Marie & Wayne would like to say a huge thank you to The Paul Strank Charitable Trust for their kind sponsorship which will enable them to continue to support the club they love.

Sharon Ball recently enjoyed a meal and a match at AFC Wimbledon over her birthday weekend, with the Community Outreach Team. She saw Wimbledon play against Sheffield Utd and although they lost 3:2 Sharon said: “It was incredible, I enjoyed seeing my hero Barry Fuller as I follow him on Twitter, and I met Neal Ardley, the manager, who was lovely too. I had my photo taken with him and Haydon the Womble!”
The JMC and All Saints Centres have recently enjoyed some brilliant pre-Christmas coffee mornings. These have been a great opportunity for parents and carers to visit and for everyone to catch up with one another and find out what they’ve been up to over the past year.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the events very enjoyable successful.

If anyone has any comments on the newsletter, or would like to write an article or just has a question, contact: Duncan or Nick on 020 8274 5361 or by email - duncan.badenoch@merton.gov.uk nick.carpenter@merton.gov.uk


Thanks also to Clive Duke & Clare Flint.