

the meriden

Regeneration update and neighbourhood news



Find out more about the You Matter charity shop and how it is improving lives in the community.



watford
community
housing

Welcome to The Meriden

Now spring has arrived, we look back at recent achievements and look forward to lots of exciting improvements and the further delivery of homes in the months ahead.

We have continued to make excellent progress throughout 2022 and the first part of 2023, delivering much-needed high-quality, affordable housing and ensuring that all the shops on the retail parade are now fully occupied. You can find out more about the exciting mix of shops and businesses in our Love Shopping Local feature on pages 6-8. In this issue's Spotlight (page 10) we meet Andre, the founder of You Matter, a charity offering support, advice and guidance to vulnerable people and those in need in the Watford area – Andre has set up shop in one of the new retail units.

On page 12 we find out more about the great work Random Café is doing in the local area to reduce food waste and promote a more sustainable way of life, and how it has diversified and extended its activities to the wider community.

The next few months will be a busy time as we continue to complete more homes and begin major highway improvements, which will likely cause a little disruption during the works but provide great results once finished.

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Meriden milestones

It's been another busy year at Meriden and we've reached key milestones in the project and implemented some important initiatives, which have brought positive change to the neighbourhood and community, as well as benefits to the wider environment. Here are just a few:



Work is progressing well on the homes at Kingfisher Way and The Turnstones, with the scaffolding completely removed now, the roofs in place, and landscaping well underway.



We've contributed to the safety and appearance of the wider neighbourhood by installing more street lighting and repairing 330m of fencing.



We've planted a large number of additional trees across the estate, including some urban orchards.



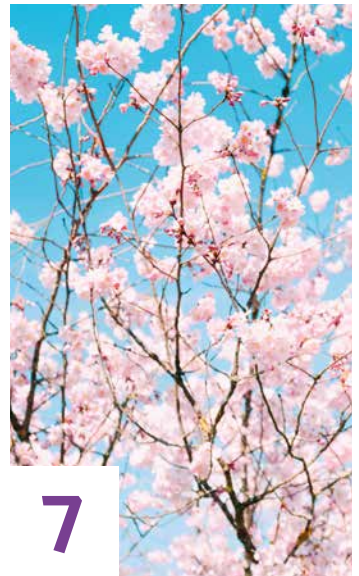
We've completed two more bungalows on York Way.



We've successfully delivered the retail parade - with full occupation of all shops. (Find out more and meet the retailers on pages 6-8).



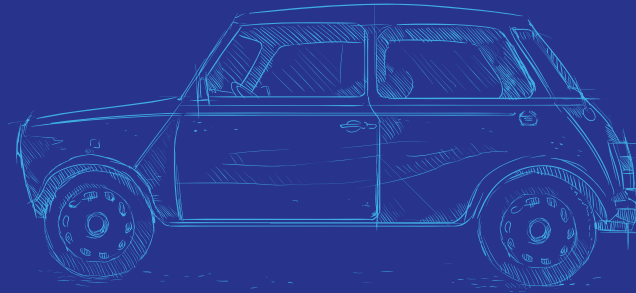
We've created a permanent space for the Random Café at Meriden Gardens to support it in delivering its mission of reducing food waste.



This spring we are planting a cherry blossom tree and creating a wild flower bank in the grass area behind the Co-op, and we have also planted 352 plants along York Way to further enhance the attractiveness and bio-diversity of the area.

Temporary car park update

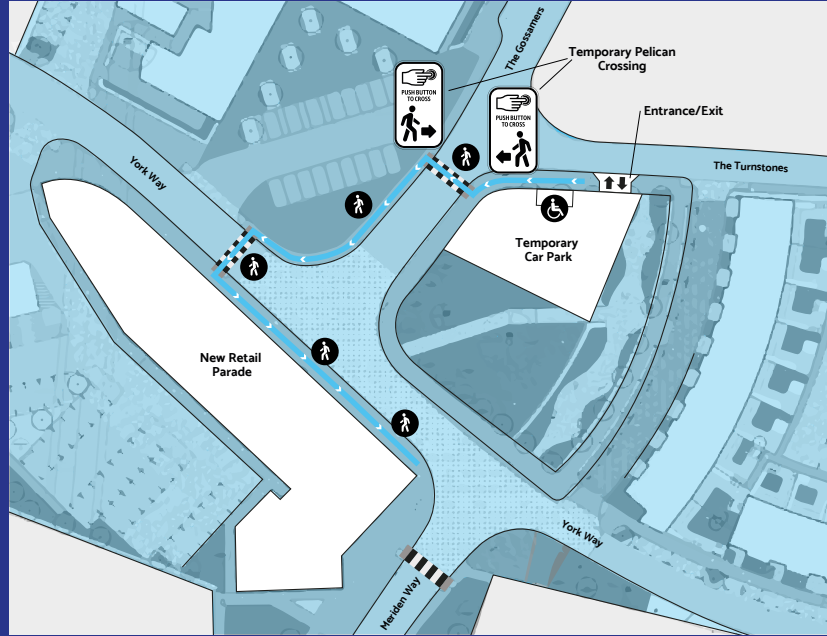
We have now instructed Mulalley to undertake the necessary works and prepare the temporary car park for opening. This means that residents will very soon have easy access to the shops while construction continues and the permanent car park at Market Square is completed.



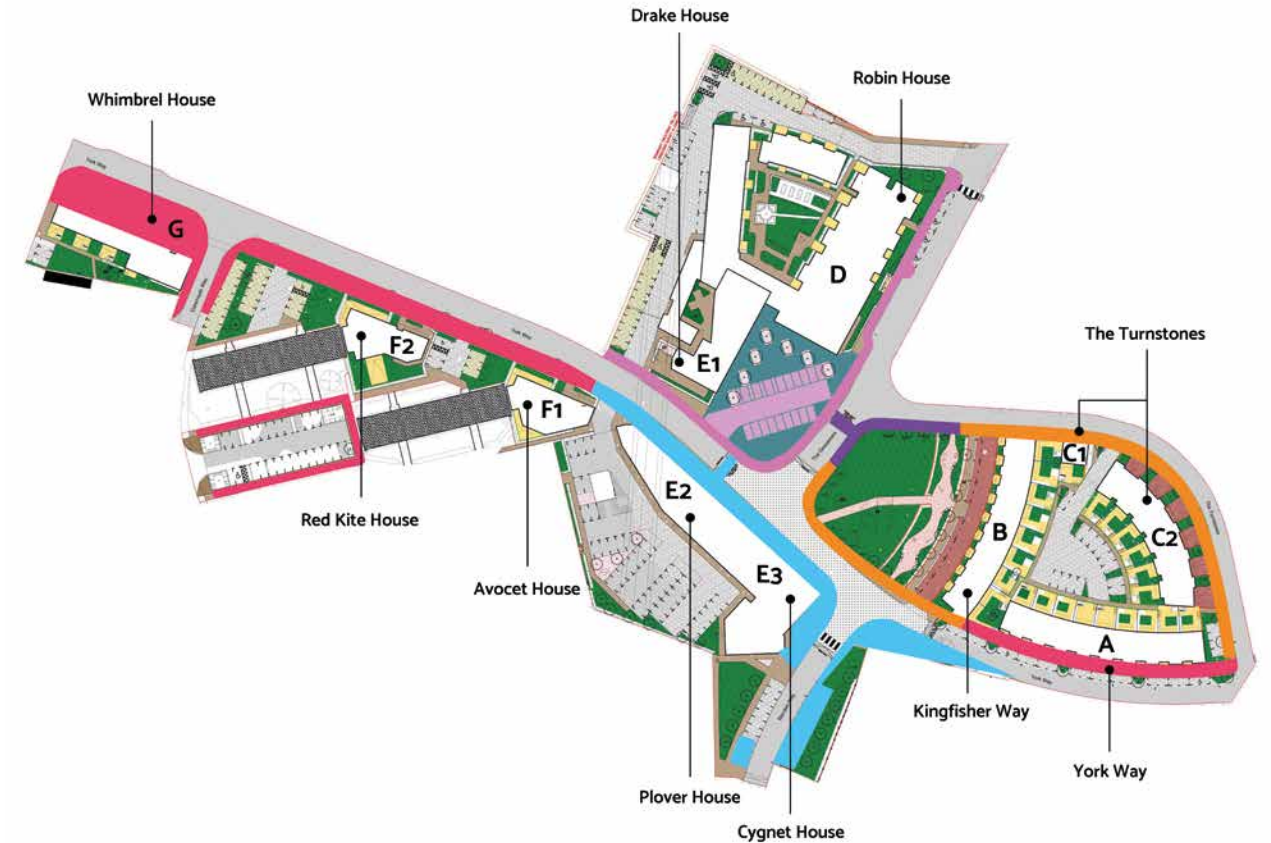
The 24-hour/7-day-a-week temporary car park will provide 14 bays offering one hour long free parking. The facility means you can make a quick visit to the shops without worrying about where you will park or parking costs. The short stay approach also discourages all-day parking ensuring there is always available space when you need it. The management of this car park will be outsourced to a parking management company, ensuring it is used as intended and users abide by the parking rules.

The adjacent map shows the location of the temporary car park and plots the route that shoppers will need to follow to access the retail parade.

Works are underway to establish the pedestrian crossing that will create the continuous and safe route from car park to shops.



Major Highways improvements



We are delighted that Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has now agreed for Mulalley to commence with the large-scale highway improvement works across the estate. These are being funded by Watford Community Housing and we anticipate that these works will be completed in September this year.

The highways project will be completed in instalments and the table below shows the associated phasing and timescales.

This agreement also includes works to the pavements outside the retail parade, which saw the post box reinstalled. These works were completed on 16 March.

Currently, the County Council's Highways team has rejected our recommendation to include pavement bollards in the design strategy outside the York Way parade. The council's decision is a huge disappointment as we recognise that bollards would act as a deterrent to illegal parking and provide better safeguarding to pedestrians using the parade. We will continue to highlight the importance of these safety bollards in the hope that the council will agree to include them within the scope of work. We will keep you informed of our progress.

We appreciate that these improvements may cause some inconvenience, especially the pavement works, and at certain points we may need to introduce further temporary traffic lights and traffic management plans to facilitate the process. As always, if this happens, we will ensure these measures are in place for as short a time as possible to limit disruption.

Thank you for your ongoing patience while these works are being carried out.

Highway Works Phasing

■ Phase 1	Start 13 February and ending 25 April	■ Phase 2	Start 3 April and ending 9 June
■ Phase 1a	Start date subject to HCC approving Minor Works Agreement. Regardless of status of other phases, works will commence as soon as possible and shouldn't impact progress of other phases.	■ Phase 3	Start 26 April and ending 23 June
		■ Phase 4	Start 28 June and ending 18 September

New homes due this summer

It has been another busy year of construction with new homes delivered and many more set for completion in summer this year.

Block A (York Way)

Two more bungalows on York Way were delivered last September and are already occupied by happy residents. This leaves one remaining bungalow set for completion by spring/summer of this year.

Block B (Kingfisher Way) and Block C1 (The Turnstones)

Work began on the final five homes along Kingfisher Way and on the homes along The Turnstones. These will be ready in the summer.

Block E1 (Drake House)

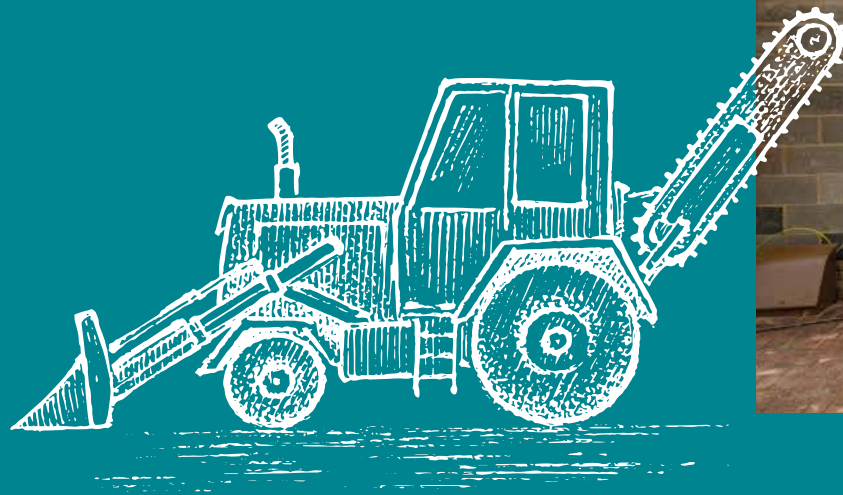
Drake House will feature a mix of 12 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments – work is nearing completion on these.



Work progressing on Block B (Kingfisher Way)



Installation of red-brick driveways at Block C1 (The Turnstones)



Works starting on the bio-diverse garden for residents of Robin House

Flexicare living – for older people in the community

Once again, we want to reassure residents that the new Flexicare building (Block D, Robin House) will provide dedicated living space predominantly for older people in the community. It will not be repurposed and used as a centre for alcohol and drug rehabilitation or for ex-criminals as many rumours circulating suggest. We understand that these rumours, although untrue, may still be causing concern for some residents. We can confirm no such centre is being built and the original plans communicated to residents in 2019 have not changed.

We are pleased to report that the Flexicare apartment building is nearing completion with internal partitioning in place and services to commence soon. Work is also underway on the bio-diverse garden which will be for the exclusive use of the Flexicare residents. Once complete, this collection of 51 one-bedroom apartments will be home to people aged over 55 who will be referred by Watford Borough Council. Depending on availability, it may also be possible for qualifying individuals to apply directly to us.



Love shopping local

We are delighted that the new retail parade is complete and the final selection of shops and businesses are settled into their attractive new premises and making a difference to the wider community. The new shopping parade offers a varied retail experience, with old favourites like

the Meriden Fish Bar sitting alongside new offerings such as Jenkins Hair Beauty Aesthetics and the You Matter charity shop. We are confident that the wide variety of services available will cater for the everyday needs of our residents.



Jetmaid
156 York Way
jetmaidcleaning.co.uk

Laundry and Eco dry cleaning specialist, Jetmaid, has been on the Meriden since 1983. Husband and wife duo, Emmanuel and Magdalena, manage the shop on a day-to-day basis and look forward to continuing their longstanding relationship with the community.

Their friendly business also encompasses other services from domestic cleaning to tailoring and alterations – and they offer a loyalty scheme for local customers too.

Unit 1

Jenkins Hair Beauty Aesthetics
158 York Way | 020 8950 3111

A big welcome to Jenkins Hair Beauty Aesthetics to the new retail parade – a one-stop-shop hairdresser and beauty salon owned and managed by Mary Auton. Mary brings her 40 plus years' hairdressing experience to the local community offering a broad mix of services from cutting and colouring to beauty and nail treatments. The salon is open 7 days a week from 10am until the last customer goes home!

"We're so excited to have finally opened our doors to the local community and are really enjoying working in the new shop space which is large, bright and spacious."



Unit 3

Chiqizza
160 York Way | 01923 674 444

For the past 15 years Meriden resident, Ali, has managed this well-loved takeaway restaurant, offering freshly made oven baked pizzas, gourmet burgers, kebabs and a wide range of drinks and desserts to the local community.

Look out for regular special offers including great lunchtime deals.



Meriden Café
Coming Soon

The Meriden Café is currently being fitted out and will open soon. It will offer local residents a welcoming space to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and delicious home-cooked breakfasts and brunches.

Unit 4

Unit 5

Meriden Fish Bar
164 York Way
meridenfishbarwatford.co.uk

The Meriden Fish Bar has long been at the heart of the community – over 25 years in fact! Owners Don and Karen are proud to serve up their much-loved traditional fish and chips from their new retail space.



Unit
6

You Matter Charity Shop

168 York Way | 01923 517071
youmatterwatford.org.uk

We are delighted to welcome the You Matter charity shop. This well-stocked shop sells pre-loved clothing, shoes and accessories, toys, records and also affordable homeware and furniture. Read more about You Matter's inspiring work in the local community in the Spotlight feature on page 10.



Meriden Post Office 170 York Way

The local post office is the lifeline of any community offering everyday postal and banking services.

The Meriden post office also sells stationery, a range of groceries, drinks and confectionery items.

The shop is open Monday to Saturday – 8am to 8pm and Sunday – 9am to 6pm. Postal services only available during normal post office operating hours.

Unit
7

Unit
8

The Co-op 174 York Way

Visit this popular supermarket chain for your everyday grocery needs. As well as an in-store bakery and Costa Coffee service, the store also has an Amazon Counter providing a convenient way to pick up your parcels.



Meet the people

Babafemi Osinlaru, Housing Officer



Meet Babafemi Osinlaru, our new housing officer for the South Meriden area.

Babafemi is dedicated to providing help in the area, including support with more complicated queries, so you might see him out and about at the Meriden.

If you're a Watford Community Housing tenant, Babafemi is available to offer advice and support on many matters from your rent account and tenancy to neighbourhood issues and anti-social behaviour. He can also support local residents who aren't Watford Community Housing tenants with general neighbourhood queries.

You can contact Babafemi on:
0800 218 2247 or babafemi.osinlaru@wcht.org.uk

Michael Hickey, Senior Site Manager



Meet Michael Hickey, Senior Site Manager

Michael grew up close to the Meriden and lives locally with his family. Because of his enduring association with the area he has a fondness for the neighbourhood and is delighted to join the Mulalley team and play a key role in the improvements and positive change taking place at the estate.

As Senior Site Manager, Michael is responsible for the safe and smooth day-to-day running of the site, the construction progress and making sure that homes continue to be delivered to the highest possible standards.

You can contact Michael on:
07827 884413 or michael.hickey@mulalley.co.uk



Spotlight on Andre Best

“Our charity aims to help reduce the financial hardship and improve the lives of adults, families and children in the local community,” says Andre, the founder of You Matter – a new charity set up to offer support, advice and guidance to vulnerable people and those in need in the Watford area. Andre and her team offer practical help and information to anyone struggling through difficult times, a service that is particularly relevant with the cost of living soaring and many people finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet.

You Matter lives up to its mantra of ‘putting you at the heart of everything we do’, with its people-focused, future-proofing approach: “We are passionate about supporting adults and young people, we provide education and training support to enable individuals to learn skills to improve their employability and to help them create opportunities to generate a sustainable income and become self-sufficient.”

You Matter opened the doors to its new charity shop at York Way in December 2021 and has been supporting the local community ever since. The shop is filled with an impressive range of good quality pre-loved men’s, women’s and children’s clothing, shoes and accessories from a range of high street and designer brands, as well as affordable second-hand furniture and homeware and pre-loved toys and records.

“We love the shop space, it offers a welcoming and friendly environment and a great place to pop in for a coffee and a chat and a browse around the shop. It’s the perfect hub for us to work from enabling us to do what we do best,” Andre says.

Working alongside their partners and sponsors, You Matter is pleased to be able to support the homeless and those in need with donations of household essentials, clothing, bedding and food bank services.

Why not pop in and browse what’s on offer, or if you are having a clear out at home consider donating to the shop to support the charity’s inspiring work.

For more information or to find out how you can become a volunteer, offer donations or ask for support for yourself or your family, please get in touch with Andre by calling **01923 517071** or email andre@youmatterwatford.org.uk

youmatterwatford.org.uk

Random Café – growing strong in the community



Random Café has been on the Meriden since 2017, where it started life as a pop-up café in the Meriden Community Centre and later took over the old Green Canteen site on Garsmouth Way. It now runs a regular community café and waste food shop from the site three times a week. It is overseen by volunteers and all profits are reinvested into running the project.

As featured in the last issue of The Meriden, Random Café's primary goal is to cut down Watford's carbon footprint by saving perfectly edible food from being thrown away. They do this in their café and shop, with a lot of items available on a pay-as-you-feel donation basis.

There are regular activities happening at the café, with a monthly book group held on the second Saturday of the month, a weekly Crafternoon Tea group every Thursday and a monthly LGBTQ+ Café on the third Friday of every month.

This range of activities has now been expanded following the completion of Random Café's new garden room. This is allowing the Random Team to hold more community-focused events including a regular dementia-friendly café, bingo afternoons and other social groups. It is also available to hire as a meeting space for small groups.

There is a lot going on behind the scenes at the moment, with sowing, planting and repairs, including the upcycling of scaffolding board to replace raised flower beds that are past their prime. When the rejuvenation work is complete the gardens will be fully accessible for the enjoyment of volunteers and anyone attending the café or shop.



Get active at Meriden Community Centre



The Meriden Community Centre, run by Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust, welcomes all the community through its doors.

We have a wide range of activities for everyone to join. Check our website for more details: Meriden Community Centre – Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust: watfordfccsetrust.com

Our flexible spaces are available for children's birthday parties and events. The main hall has space for a bouncy castle, plus we have plenty of tables and chairs available and use of the kitchen. We also have a well-equipped gym, with discount entry to Watford Community Housing tenants.

Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust delivers free Premier League Kicks weekly sessions which include football, dance and youth clubs. The centre provides a space where local participants come and take part in inclusive sessions, meet new friends, and feel like they are really part of the community. On top of these sessions, we provide holiday camps, workshops, trips and tournaments for people in the local community.

Feel free to pop down and join in all the fun!

Contact the Meriden Community Centre
To speak to one of the team call 01923 894862 or email meridenreception@watfordfc.com

Social
Instagram – Watfordplkicks
Facebook – Meriden Community Centre

Opening times
Monday to Friday 9am – 10pm
Saturdays 9am – 5pm | Sundays 9am – 2pm

Future events



Random Café

Meriden Gardens

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday:
10am – 2pm

Regular events at Random Café

Book Group – Second Saturday of every month

Crafternoon Tea – Every Thursday

LGBTQ+ Café – Third Friday of every month

Premier League Kicks

Meriden Community Centre

Includes youth football and dance sessions on Mondays and Tuesdays

All sessions are FREE to attend.

For more information contact

Tate Macpherson via email

tate.macpherson@watfordfc.com

or call 07707 289 043.



MRA Coffee Mornings

Meriden Community Centre

Every Wednesday: 10am – 12pm
Everyone is welcome

Feel Good Fitness Sessions (for those identifying as female)

Meriden Community Centre

Mondays: 10am – 11am (gym based session)
Thursday: 7pm – 8pm (toning/aerobics)

Construction enquiries:

Rob Jones

Senior Project Manager at Mulalley

T: 07827 884 403

E: robert.jones@mulalley.co.uk

If you know anyone who would like to receive a copy of this newsletter please contact Tasha Hiscock:

Tasha.Hiscock@wcht.org.uk