

# PATRON <sup>AND</sup> PREMIER MEMBER PROFILE

SIXTH EDITION

RESPONSE, RESILIENCE, RECOVERY

MERTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S ONLINE MAGAZINE  
FEATURING HOW OUR PATRON AND PREMIER MEMBERS  
HAVE RESPONDED TO COVID-19



# WELCOME

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Firstly, I'd like to thank all our Patron and Premier members for the support you have given us since April 2020. Merton Chamber continues to be the largest area based Chamber of Commerce in London and we have punched high to represent Merton and our amazing businesses during this time. It has been a roller coaster for us and for the business community as a whole. My team has worked harder than ever before to support our local business community – doing more on introducing businesses to each other, ensuring we get the up to date policy changes out to businesses really quickly and, most importantly, to represent your concerns and challenges and promote the fantastic effort and work that local businesses have done – and will continue to do - during this most challenging period.

In this edition of our Premier Profile we share with you the journey that our Patron and Premier members have been experiencing – their ups and downs and, most importantly, the resilience, inspiration and entrepreneurial spirit that shines through.

*Diana Steek*

CEO, Merton Chamber of Commerce

# WHO'S WHO?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Hartley Fowler Chartered Accountants LLP - <b>Patron Member</b> | Peacock & Co                                    |
| Morrison Solicitors LLP - <b>Patron Member</b>                  | QUDO  |
| AFC Wimbledon   | Sing in French                                  |
| BizSpace plc  | Skip Technologies Ltd                           |
| Centre Court Management   | South Thames Colleges Group                     |
| London Borough of Merton  | The All England Lawn Tennis (Championships) Ltd |
| Metro Bank - Wimbledon Branch                                   | University of Roehampton                        |
| New Wimbledon Theatre   | Vaile Office Cleaning Ltd                       |
|   | Wimbledon Business Studio                       |
|   | WSM Partners LLP                                |

## The benefits of being a Patron or Premier Member

- Bespoke membership package
- High profile promotion in our new online business directory
- Promotion via our well established marketing channels, website, social media and extensive business database
- Invitations to exclusive events

## Sponsorship Opportunities

Being a Patron or Premier Member gives businesses the chance to sponsor events and activities across the borough, or work in partnership with Merton Chamber, which in turn helps to raise their profile and make contact with business leaders.

These activities include the Merton Best Business Awards, AGM and Networking evening, Business Growth Workshops, Merton Business Leaders Forum as well as the Wimbledon Young Professionals Group.

Find out more about Premier membership online  
[mertonchamber.co.uk/membership/premier](http://mertonchamber.co.uk/membership/premier)

news and information from your council

# my merton

## GIVING



### Community spirit

How the council and the community are supporting our most vulnerable residents

### Shop local, shop safe

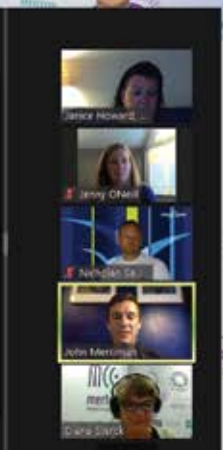
Back the borough's businesses



**THERE FROM THE START**

- Barclays Bank plc
- Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development
- Elys
- Hartley Fowler Chartered Accountants
- London Borough of Merton
- Marcus Beale Architects Ltd
- Microbee Ltd
- New Wimbledon Theatre
- Parkside Hospital
- Peacock & Co
- Polka Theatre
- WSM Partners LLP

mertonchamber.co.uk @mertonchamber



# HARTLEY FOWLER LLP

## How has Hartley Fowler changed, adapted and grown during lockdown?

Much like everyone else, Hartley Fowler have had to adapt in a number of ways, both internally in how we operate as a business, as well as how we service our client base.

Our clients were propelled into a world of the unknown with some of their business activities completely drying up overnight. As their professional advisers we were often their first port of call to help them understand the ever-changing government support - so keeping up to date and interpreting the schemes was a challenge in its own right.



Jonathan Askew and Julien Upson of Hartley Fowler LLP, Nov 2019

As a company, we were already in the process of embracing agile working but having to enable all staff to work remotely definitely sped up the process. We have nearly completed our upgrade to Microsoft Office 365.

When it comes to our staff, we made use of the government's furlough scheme for our own team members, as well as processing furlough claims on behalf of our clients.

## What challenges have you faced? Tell us your journey!

Our main challenges were around being unable to carry out some of our normal services, such as our audit work. Normally we would carry out company audits by having a member of the team go into the clients' offices which wasn't possible to do during lockdown. In times of increased opportunities for fraudulent activity, having to do audits remotely through remote access, phone and email wasn't ideal. The deferment of a number of tax filing deadlines has also had an impact on our staff as the work they would normally do during this time of year simply wasn't there.

Many of our staff weren't used to working on their own, without their managers' supervision, and in a potentially distracting environment, so we put in place a range of new processes to ensure they were still able to access the support needed. Our current challenge is to facilitate a safe return to work for our team.

## What are your hopes and aspirations for the future now?

We remain cautiously optimistic about the future. We have seen a positive increase in property related clients with many looking to benefit from the stamp duty savings and as a result now looking seriously into the buy to let option.

With the merger of our Horsham and Brighton offices to create a larger and more efficient office in Brighton, we hope to offer a better and more streamlined service to our clients based along the South coast, putting us in a good position to continue offering our services to all businesses in London and the South.



To find out more about Hartley Fowler LLP visit [hartleyfowler.com](http://hartleyfowler.com)

# MORRISONS SOLICITORS

## What changes have Morrison had to put in place during Lockdown?

Prior to lockdown we considered ourselves to be a flexible business, but like all businesses, the last few months have truly put this to the test. Inevitably the biggest change has been moving all staff to working remotely but with that came other challenges. However, from remote signings of wills from the end of a garden path, to virtual staff coffee breaks, I have been consistently impressed with the adaptability, ingenuity and dedication that our staff have demonstrated throughout the last few months.

## Any challenges faced?

The initial challenge that springs to mind was the move to such a strong reliance on technology. Almost overnight all events became webinars, all meetings became virtual and social media platforms like LinkedIn became more important than ever. We are pleased to say that we quickly found our feet – running a number of successful webinars for business owners and launching a program of LinkedIn training across the firm to help our teams keep in touch with clients and contacts and share insight on current events.



A rainbow collage of Morrisons staff put together in support of the NHS

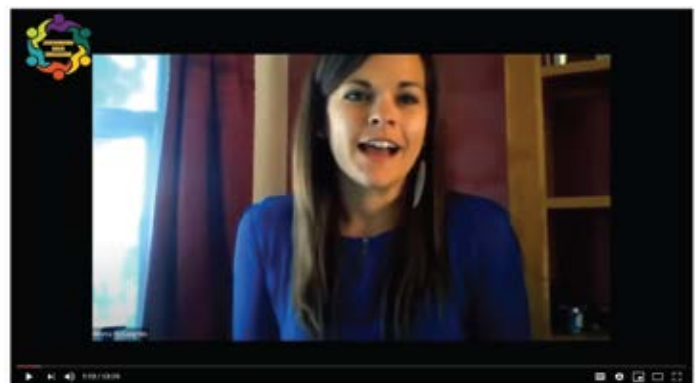
As a firm we also pride ourselves on a strong sense of community and have built a company culture of which we are very proud. We were keen to ensure that without day-to-day interaction in the office, staff still had opportunities to interact and collaborate. As such we ran lunchtime events on Zoom, launched a staff wellbeing group on social media and ran regular touch base meetings using interactive platforms so everyone could participate and submit ideas whilst working remotely.

## Hopes and aspirations for the future of Morrisons?

Whilst this has undoubtedly been a difficult time for most, we have also seen some positive change as a result of the challenges this year has brought. Many have enjoyed the move to remote work and renewed our commitment to a good work life balance and time spent with family and friends. I hope that as a business we emerge from lockdown having learnt from this time, not only to adapt to whatever the next few months may bring, but also to continue this focus on better personal wellbeing. I know that whatever happens we will work with the same ingenuity, commitment and determination that our teams have demonstrated in the last few months, to continue to provide our clients with the best service possible.

**Merton Chamber are delighted that Morrisons have been able to work with us on some of our Reach Out and Connect Webinars which you can find out more about on our website:**

**[mertonchamber.co.uk/post/reach-out-and-connect-employment-and-legislative-changes](https://mertonchamber.co.uk/post/reach-out-and-connect-employment-and-legislative-changes)**



Reach Out and Connect: Employment and Skills 21:7:2020

**To find out more about Morrisons Solicitors visit [morrlaw.com](https://morrlaw.com)**

# AFC WIMBLEDON

Eighteen years ago, AFC Wimbledon rose from the ashes of Wimbledon FC. We came out of adversity and through grit, determination and an enduring passion for our club, we are now globally recognised for proving what the power of fans can achieve. We've taken our club from the ninth tier of English football to the Football League in just nine years and are now firmly established in League One - just two promotions away from the Premier League.

Now, the next part of our miracle is here: we are going home. It's been 29 years since we last played at our famous old ground - Plough Lane. Against all the odds, we are due to move into a new stadium, just a stone's throw from the old ground.



With the new stadium close to completion, we now have many opportunities for new partners. Our ethos will remain the same. We work together to make sure your investment works for you and that you feel part of our special family. Together, we form a partnership: you, the fans, the club. The opportunities to be part of our astonishing story are immense and there are many ways you could partner us as we take our club into the next, exciting era. We are back, we are home and we are Wimbledon.

**Our voice will be heard, loud and proud on our historic return to Plough Lane – so why not join us and get to the core of what the beautiful game is all about?!**

## Partner Sponsorship Opportunities for Business

We will be offering a diverse range of innovative and exciting packages to help drive your brand and best suit your profile. Our aim is to help you become an integral part of our great journey but, if you have something specific in mind, then please talk to us.

These packages include:

- **Principal Partner**
- **Official Partner**
- **Partner**
- **Match Sponsorship**
- **Match Ball Sponsorship**

## Business Club

The AFC Wimbledon Business Club is an initiative which aims to bring together the common interests of the club's partners, sponsors, fans and community. Through events you will be part of a community that shares successes and creates mutually interesting deals we can all benefit from!

To those joining the business club, we guarantee the opportunity to pitch your sales to the club. It is in our mutual interest to work with our own community. You also have the opportunity to advertise with us - one of the most valuable assets AFC Wimbledon has to offer is the loyalty and passion of its large fan base. Help our fans to help you.



**For more info:**  
**commercial@afcwimbledon.co.uk**  
**Website:**  
**afcwimbledon.co.uk**

# LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON



Merton Council is to continue supporting local businesses with the unprecedented challenges COVID-19 has brought, and is also offering support to help businesses as the transition period following the UK's departure from European Union draws to an end.

Businesses across the borough are already experiencing testing times due to the pandemic, however it is vital that they also take action now to prepare for Brexit.

The transition period following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU) is due end on 31 December and the country will be leaving the EU single market and customs union. The free movement of workers between the UK and the EU countries, and the associated rights to the same working conditions, social security and health services, will also end.

Merton Council is committed to supporting businesses by providing information, advice and guidance on the necessary steps they need to take to get ready for Brexit. In addition to our weekly newsletter we will also be maintaining a Brexit help and advice page on our website, which will include all the latest information on the support available for businesses.

The council is reminding businesses that preparation for 1 January 2021 is required whether or not they trade or do business in the EU. The new rules will vary for different industries but are likely to impact on workforce, data protection, contracts, and other organisational aspects.

In November, it is anticipated that more residents will be looking for employment support, and so the council is also encouraging businesses to look at the local provision available which can be found at:

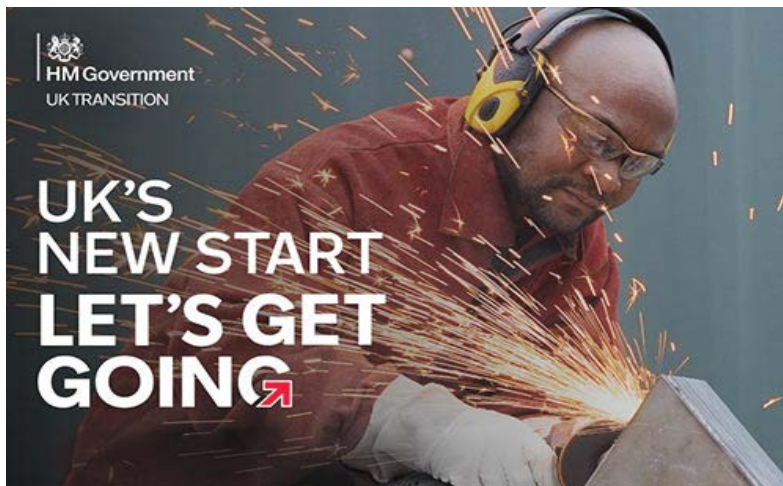
[merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/finding-jobs-training](https://merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/finding-jobs-training)

The council works closely with partners, including the local Job Centre Plus, to support people back into employment:

[merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/finding-jobs-training](https://merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/finding-jobs-training)

For information on the scheme to encourage businesses to take on apprentices, visit:

[merton.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/business-support-and-advice/the-apprenticeship-levy](https://merton.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/business-support-and-advice/the-apprenticeship-levy)



## Key steps to take:

- Businesses should review their supply chains and ensure that their suppliers have prepared for the end of the transition period. Any border delays, tariffs and duties that suppliers encounter, are likely to impact the businesses they work with.
- Businesses should encourage their EU employees and eligible non-European Economic Area (EEA) residents to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). Citizens Advice Merton is offering support with applications.
- Businesses are also advised to visit the GOV.UK website for a personalised list of steps to get their business ready. They can also fill out an enquiry form to get support from the Department for International Trade.
- Visit the council's Brexit help and advice page on our website where the Government guidance on how businesses can prepare for the end of the transition period can be found. Businesses will also be able to find details on how they can access support from the Government and other organisations.

To find out more about the ways London Borough of Merton are supporting business visit [merton.gov.uk](https://merton.gov.uk)



# WSM PARTNERS LLP



## What changes have WSM had to put in place during Lockdown?

Along with all our clients and every business up and down the country WSM has had to adapt rapidly to the various and changing impacts of the pandemic on our health, our social lives, our business and the wider economy.

Our business, providing business advice and accounting and tax services, is one which can be delivered remotely so we have been able to provide uninterrupted advice and support to our clients through our team working from their homes. The effectiveness of our switch in working environments is due to several factors the most important of which has been our team and their adaptability to the new ways of working – they have been brilliant.

WSM have also benefitted from our focus in recent years on using technology and digitization to deliver our services and to manage our business. This made the switch for our team to working from home easier and working together through virtual platforms such as Teams, Zoom, Skype etc. very effective. It is not the same as working in the office together but regular Teams coffee and tea breaks along with Zoom quizzes and the firms virtual summer event – Around the World in Eighty Days - has ensured we have all stayed in touch on social as well as work matters.



## What have been WSM's biggest challenges this year so far?

Our rapid and effective change in our own business has allowed us to focus on the main challenge - helping all of our clients as they have grappled with the uncertainties created by the pandemic and adjusting their businesses to the “new normal”. Helping our clients has required assimilating all the details of the government support policies and restrictions and rapidly delivering to all our clients and all businesses the key information they need to help their decision making.

As well as providing information we have been tailoring our advice and support to the specific needs of each individual client and helping them assess the alternative options available as the uncertainties have raised very different issues for our clients depending on their business, their financial position and the government support and restrictions which apply to them. For some clients this has meant helping them as their businesses have needed to expand unexpectedly rapidly; whilst for many other clients it has been, and continues to be, a much more challenging time. However, none of our clients businesses have been exempt from the effects of the pandemic and they have all needed support.

As the recently announced additional restrictions make clear the immediate challenges and uncertainties which all businesses face, including WSM, will extend well in to 2021 and adjusting to the “new normal” will take longer still. More recently we have been helping our clients address the additional challenges which the imminent end of the Brexit transitional period will bring along with the additional uncertainties of the possible deal or no deal scenarios.

The word unprecedented has been much used in 2020 with good reason – it has brought challenges for all of us which are testing our adaptability and resilience in the face of new and globally shared uncertainties.

## What are your hopes and aspirations for the future now?

At WSM we are learning to live with the continual uncertainty and change which the pandemic has brought with it and to use the hard won lessons make for our business and those of our clients more effective and productive in the “new normal”. The hope is that together we can minimise the cost and time of getting to the “new normal” for everyone.

# ALL ENGLAND LAWN TENNIS CLUB

## Wimbledon Foundation supports local response and recovery efforts

The outbreak of Covid-19 saw the charity sector fighting on two fronts: supporting those most severely affected by the pandemic and staying afloat financially in the wake of lockdown and cancelled events. The Wimbledon Foundation responded quickly, pausing several of its local grant programmes and reallocating the funding to centralised channels including the Merton Giving Coronavirus Fund and London Community Response Fund. Emergency grants were awarded to charities in Merton and Wandsworth delivering vital supplies to the most vulnerable (including Age UK Merton, the Merton Winter Night Shelter and Wimbledon Foodbank) and to projects supporting those most severely affected by the pandemic including the homeless, disabled people, BAME and LGBTQ+ communities, older people and refugees.

In addition, the Foundation launched a £1.2m Coronavirus Fund to help aid the response and recovery efforts across society. So far £750,000 has been awarded to local charities and organisations in Merton and Wandsworth to address immediate needs, financial resilience, helping children and young people, and mental health support; leading homelessness charities operating in London such as Crisis; and charities helping the national response including the British Red Cross and NHS Charities Together.



Following the cancellation of The Championships, the All England Club's Wingfield kitchen teamed up with City Harvest to distribute hot meals for vulnerable people in Merton and Wandsworth with 14,400 meals delivered over the summer months. Items no longer required for The Championships, such as towels, tennis balls, clothing and toiletries, have been donated to local organisations including St George's Hospital Charity and homelessness charities Spires London and SPEAR.

Helen Parker, Head of the Wimbledon Foundation said, "The way in which local charities have responded and adapted their services in order to look after those who are vulnerable in our community has been remarkable. We look forward to continuing to work together as a sector to help those in need through these incredibly challenging times."

To find out more about the work of the Wimbledon Foundation, visit [wimbledon.com/foundation](http://wimbledon.com/foundation)

## QUDO

### How has Qudo changed in lockdown?

For many of the team it was just the location of their desk that changed, as we heavily use remote meeting and collaboration tools. Our extensive Cloud Communications portfolio of products is also managed by our in-house developed cloud service management platform Uboss, so the tens of thousands of service changes, additional application and device order were managed seamlessly without straining the human resources.

Whilst we have seen some buying decisions delayed, our sales still grow and the pipeline is unsurprisingly strong as customers look to replace office first communications tools with flexible, or even mobile first applications.

### Any challenges faced?

Because we already existed as champions of workplace flexibility, the actual transition from office to home in our UK team was seamless and easy. Each member of the team already had the tools to work from home and so, the core job was to get extra screens home when it became clear this was not to be a short-lived requirement.

Our 100 strong development team in India were in a position common with many UK businesses but the management team rapidly sourced the infrastructure and technical equipment need. Happily, by lock-down, all were fully operational from home.

### What are your hopes and aspirations for the future now?

We hope, like us, UK businesses will experience an increase in productivity through the change in the workplace structure. We have so many reports of increase productivity/staff satisfaction that it's clear that this change will be, to a greater degree, permanent. Balance is key however, so I am sure workforces will create a healthy mix between remote working and shared office time.



Find out more  
at [qudo.com](http://qudo.com)

# SKIP TECHNOLOGIES

Skip was always about changing an archaic process into a convenient and more welcoming User Experience; it's about bringing back the 'welcome', using only a visitor's smart device. Instead of queuing up at a reception desk, filling out paperwork and maybe fumbling with someone's touch screen, Skip allows visitors to simply walk into a building where they have an appointment and check-in on their own phone. They can sign NDAs, get their ID verified and there's even a native chat with their host. Reception staff can engage in hospitality instead of bureaucracy and visitors can walk in relaxed and prepared.

When Covid hit, we realised that in order to get people back into the built world, offices and public spaces of all kinds would need to offer more - a major tenet of this offering would revolve around Contactless Entry which is exactly what we offer. In addition, we found many of our additional ideas would also be very relevant, such as easy Occupancy Management and pre-visit communication, where for example a visitor can fill out a health questionnaire or get comfortable with the safety procedures they will encounter before arriving. So we didn't change as such, but we realised a greater sense of urgency. Our mission evolved into a real desire to help kickstart the economy alongside the original vision.

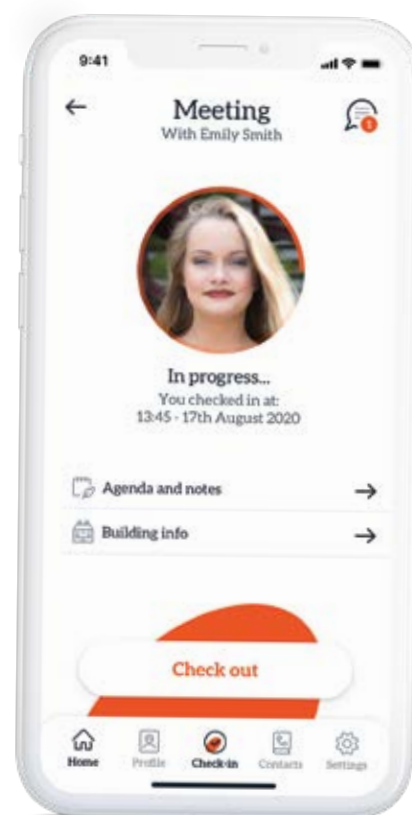
In terms of challenges faced, we are the same as any StartUp. We would say getting our message out is the hardest part. Do people know we offer a downloadable SaaS platform, so there's no need for any hardware or consulting? Skip can be up and running in minutes, and can run alongside existing reception set-ups and staff. Our job is to make sure we tell that story and it's definitely difficult while we try to build a team on a shoe-string budget! We will be more involved in marketing campaigns in the near future, so we feel positive about explaining who we are a lot more effectively very soon.

We are passionate about doing our bit to get the economy back on its feet again.

Our simple, downloadable product can sit alongside people's existing solutions and staff, and we aim to basically add to the software architecture as we and our customers learn how to adapt to the new way of working. There are so many grandiose predictions right now, I don't think any of us knows how it will end up, but Skip is agile enough to grow alongside a business as the dust settles.

We are a family business, and we know how important job security is - we want to help people with this low cost idea - by helping businesses back to work in whatever way the office economy ends up evolving - Skip feels like the right idea at the right time.

We have a lot to learn, but we feel we have enough positivity, and our goal is ultimately just that - to create something positive out of this pandemic, so we'll look back and wonder why it was never done before.



To find out more about Skip Technologies visit [skipeverywhere.com](https://skipeverywhere.com)

# PEACOCK & CO SOLICITORS

## How has Peacock & Co adapted during lockdown?

We love to be involved in local events and sadly for us, lockdown hit just as we were about to host our Big Pub Quiz in aid of Merton Giving, our supported charity, at the newly opened Dog & Fox event space. Earlier in the year we hosted our Epsom property lunch and partnered with Time & Leisure, and Merton Chamber, for a networking breakfast marking International Women's Day. Everything changed overnight with lockdown, but we were able to quickly transition to offer our full-range of services to clients from home.

## What have been your challenges?

Inevitably, lockdown saw the property market change immediately with many of its components such as viewings, surveys and removals grind to a halt. Conveyancing clients needed greater care and attention - we were still able to progress completions, but ultimately many transactions were put on hold. Now, after months at home, we are seeing lots of activity as people are keen to take advantage of the Stamp Duty holiday and move on! Foremost, we were able to support clients requiring wills and administering probate during what was a horribly concerning time.

## What are your hopes and aspirations for the future now?

We are delighted that September has seen our full team return to our Wimbledon and Epsom offices. With a Covid-secure workplace, we are now able to return to face-to-face meetings, as well as continuing to use video platforms. The pandemic has touched all of our lives in so many different ways. At Peacock & Co, it has reminded us of the value of a great team, the importance of nimble thinking and the support of our local and business community. As we look to 2021 and our thirtieth anniversary year, these are the things we intend to celebrate!



To find out more about Peacock & Co visit [peacock-law.co.uk](http://peacock-law.co.uk)

# SING IN FRENCH

OUR NEWEST PREMIER MEMBER!

## How has your business changed in lockdown?

The original goal of Sing In French Limited, was to teach French through theatre and song via my fun bi-lingual family musical show, Pinot The Musical. Lockdown put a stop to live shows so I decided to re-invent myself. I created two new English musical works, one for film and the other for animation.

## What challenges have you faced?

To aim for the big screen I needed to seek out a US Screenwriter collaborator as I had no experience in screenplay writing. Together, we adapted the stage script of Pinot The Musical to a screenplay. Then we collaborated on a screenplay for my brand new animation musical work. We are about to start the screenplay for the film project.

## What are your hopes and aspirations for the future now?

I want to be part of a local group that provides free musical theatre workshops for local adults of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, to provide them with the opportunity to create and perform their own material as well as direct, produce, stage-manage, design and create sets, design and create costumes. Support from experienced and technical mentors would be brought in as required.



## Why did you join Merton Chamber as a Premier Member?

I want to link up with companies to discuss how to run free musical theatre projects in Merton for adults who want to improve their self-confidence and social interaction.

To find out more about Sing in French visit [singinfrench.com](http://singinfrench.com)



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