

# Residents Offer

Housing options  
Compensation  
Support



Regenerating your  
neighbourhood

Circle  
Housing™

Merton Priory

# At a glance

## High Path Residents Offer

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We've listened carefully to what High Path residents have told us about their hopes and expectations for the Residents Offer. We believe the Offer local people have helped us produce is fair, gives everyone the opportunity to stay in High Path and helps keep the community together.

**If regeneration goes ahead we promise the following:**

### For existing Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants:

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new homes for all existing tenants



keep the same tenancy rights you have now



disturbance payment of £3,000



relocation payment of £4,900 per household



free, professional packing and removals



free handyman service to help older and vulnerable tenants



help if you need to move temporarily because of regeneration



new energy-efficient fridge freezer, washing machine, cooker and dishwasher

## For resident homeowners (leaseholders and freeholders):

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### A range of options to meet your needs, including:



a new replacement home in High Path at no additional cost to you if you choose to stay, or



open market value for your home plus ten per cent if you prefer to leave, or



a shared equity option for those who prefer it

### Plus:



a disturbance payment of £3,000 per household



free and independent valuation of your home



legal fees and other costs reimbursed



payment of Stamp Duty Land Tax



help if you need to move temporarily because of regeneration

## For non-resident homeowners (leaseholders and freeholders):

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open market value for your property, plus a 7.5 per cent additional payment



legal fees and other costs reimbursed



payment of Stamp Duty Land Tax



opportunity to buy a new home in High Path at market value

# Dear resident

This document tells you about the housing options, compensation and support you'll be entitled to if regeneration goes ahead. A big thank you to everyone who has shared their views and worked with us to develop the details of this Offer.

Four points about the Residents Offer:

## 1. Keeping the community together

Every Circle Housing Merton Priory tenant and resident homeowner will have a guaranteed right to stay in High Path.

## 2. Community and green spaces

The regeneration will also mean improved community and green spaces for High Path.

## 3. New energy-efficient homes

New homes for every Circle Housing Merton Priory tenant and resident homeowner. The new homes will be energy-efficient, well-designed and adaptable. All new homes will be the same size or larger than the homes they replace. None will be smaller. Every home will have a private garden, balcony or terrace.

## 4. Adaptable and accessible homes

All homes will be built to Lifetime Home Standards, meaning they can be adapted to meet your changing needs. At least ten per cent will be fully wheelchair accessible.

Please contact me to get more information and advice. You can ask questions and tell me what you think about the Offer.

**Donna Brown**  
regeneration officer

**020 3441 8518**  
[High Path@circle.org.uk](mailto:High Path@circle.org.uk)



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# Why regeneration?

**We're committed to upgrading and repairing all the homes and neighbourhoods we manage in Merton. But in the case of High Path, it's more cost effective in the longer term to replace homes.**

High Path residents have told us that they are proud of their neighbourhood. This project will build on and enhance High Path's many qualities including the strong sense of community.

## **The regeneration of High Path would provide:**

- new high-quality, energy-efficient homes
- larger homes for families who are currently overcrowded
- new community spaces, play areas and better access to South Wimbledon Underground Station
- well-connected, safe and attractive streets
- new jobs, training and employment opportunities for local people.

## **The alternative to regeneration**

**Many of the current homes will need significant investment to bring them up to modern standards. Without regeneration, Merton Standard improvements would mean internal upgrades to kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors where required, but there would be:**

- no structural changes, apart from essential repairs
- no new homes
- no new community facilities or green spaces
- ongoing and repeat repairs.

Homeowners would have to contribute to the cost of these improvements in line with their existing freehold or leasehold agreement.

## **Looking ahead**

If High Path residents tell us this Offer is fair, we will start to prepare planning applications for these regeneration plans. If we get planning approval from the council, we would aim to start building new homes as soon as possible.

You will have the opportunity to tell us if the Offer is fair when we carry out an independent survey.

**"I have very good memories of High Path with my family and children growing up"**

High Path resident

# The Residents Offer



Regenerating your  
neighbourhood



# The Residents Offer

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**Your individual offer depends on the type of home you have and whether you're a Circle Housing Merton Priory tenant, a resident homeowner living in High Path, or a non-resident homeowner living somewhere else.**

Homeowners have different legal rights and responsibilities to people who rent their home from Circle Housing Merton Priory, or those who rent privately. The following pages give you the details of what housing options, support and compensation Circle Housing Merton Priory will give you, depending on your circumstances.

**"My only concern is the financial offer as I don't have a mortgage. If I was staying in a same size property I wouldn't want to take a mortgage out."**

High Path resident



# For Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants



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# The Residents Offer

## For Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants

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**If you're an existing Circle Housing Merton Priory tenant you'll get a new home in High Path. Your tenancy rights will not change because of regeneration and we'll offer you compensation and help with moving.**

### Your right to return

We'll work with Merton Council to agree and apply a local lettings policy. This means that existing tenants will have a guaranteed right to return to a new home in High Path.

### Assessing your needs

We'll work with Merton Council to make sure that Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants are offered suitable homes.

We'll meet with you and give you clear information about what you can expect when you need to move.

### Keep all your tenancy rights

You'll keep the same tenancy rights that you have now. For example, if you have the Right to Buy now, you'll keep that right in your new home.

### Rent

Your rent will be set in the same way as it is now. Regeneration does not affect your rent level.

If you move into a home with more bedrooms or fewer bedrooms, you'll pay the appropriate rent according to the number of bedrooms in your new home.

### A new home

If your household is overcrowded, we'll assess your housing needs and offer you a new home of the right size and type.

The table overleaf shows you how many bedrooms you'll be entitled to in your new home. These rules and are set out in Merton Council's nominations policy. For full details see [www.merton.gov.uk/housing\\_register\\_and\\_nominations\\_policy\\_-\\_august\\_2012.pdf](http://www.merton.gov.uk/housing_register_and_nominations_policy_-_august_2012.pdf)



## A new home to meet your needs

	Single person	1	One bedroom
	Couple with no children	1	One bedroom
	One or two adults, with one child aged under one year	1	One bedroom
	One or two adults, with one child aged over one year	2	Two bedrooms
	One or two adults, with two children of the same sex	2	Two bedrooms
	One or two adults, with two children of different sexes and one child aged over five	3	Three bedrooms
	One or two adults, with three children	3	Three bedrooms
	One or two adults, with four children (two of each sex)	3	Three bedrooms
	One or two adults, with four children (one of one sex and three of the other sex)	4	Four bedrooms
	One or two adults, with five or more children	4	Four bedrooms

Any other immediate family members aged 18 or over will be entitled to their own bedroom provided they are:

- not living as husband or wife
- not living as a partner, including same sex partner.

## Prefer somewhere smaller?

If you would prefer a smaller home than your existing home, we will offer a payment for each extra bedroom that you voluntarily and permanently give up. We would offer you:

1

£5,000 for one bedroom

2

£3,000 for second and further bedrooms

This will be based on the number of bedrooms in your home when it was originally built.

+1

Needs plus one

If your current home has more bedrooms than you need (for example, if your children have grown up and moved away), we'll offer you a new home with one bedroom above your housing need. We call this 'needs plus one.'

For example, if you currently live on your own or as a couple in a three-bedroom home, we would offer you a new two-bedroom home.

## Confirming your offer

When we confirm your final offer of a new home, we'll visit you and give you an offer pack. This will include a detailed offer letter with written confirmation of the transfer of your existing tenancy. The offer letter will be signed by you and by Circle Housing Merton Priory and you will have a copy to keep. We'll make you two offers of a suitable home.

## Choosing your new home

You'll be able to see the new homes while they're being built, and visit a finished example to help you make a final decision. If you confirm your choice, we'll reserve the home you've accepted.

Unless your needs change after you have accepted the offer but before you move in to your new home, we'll expect you to accept the home you've chosen.

## If things change

If your circumstances change after you've received the offer pack but before you move into your new home (for example, because of illness, disability or a change in family size), we'll make a new offer that meets your needs.

If you're not happy with the home we offer, you can appeal on the grounds listed in your offer pack.

## Moving once

We'll make every effort to make sure you move straight into your new home.

If you do have to move more than once, we'll help you find a temporary home. You'll get extra financial help and compensation if you have to move more than once (see page 14 for details).



## Practical help and support

We'll help you to arrange and prepare for your move. We'll pay for removals including packing materials and a packing service.

For older and vulnerable residents, we'll offer help with things like re-hanging curtains and fitting lightbulbs. If you have any extra needs connected with your move, we can offer support or refer you to specialist services.

Extra help could include:

- Help with claiming benefits at your new address
- Help with changing gas, electricity, water, phone and other utility supplies
- Advice about home aids and adaptations.

## New kitchen appliances

To help you settle into your new home we'll offer you new kitchen appliances when you move in. Each home will come with a new cooker, fridge freezer, washing machine and dishwasher. There will be no charge or increase in rent for this.

You can, of course, choose to exclude some of these if you want to bring your own appliances with you.

## Pets welcome

The rules on keeping pets in your home will not change because of the regeneration plans. If you already have a pet, you can keep it.

## Service charge

The regeneration will have no effect on how your service charge is calculated.

You may move into a different type of home and there are likely to be new facilities, green spaces and improved communal areas. There will also be more people to contribute to service charges because of the additional homes. But service charges will continue to be set in line with the terms of your tenancy agreement.





## Compensation

We'll give you financial help towards the cost of furnishings like carpets and curtains, as well as changing electricity, gas and other utility supplies.

## Relocation payment

We'll also give you a relocation payment of £4,900 when you need to move because of regeneration, to compensate you for the loss of your home.

If you owe rent or other money to Circle Housing Merton Priory, we'll deduct this from your relocation payment.

## Temporary move

If you have to move to a temporary home and are there for one year or longer, we'll give you an additional £3,000 disturbance payment.

## Disturbance payment

We'll offer you £3,000 to cover the costs of:

- redirecting mail (for up to one year)
- altering or replacing carpets and curtains
- disconnecting and reconnecting appliances such as washing machines
- disconnecting and reconnecting services such as phones and internet.

**"I feel more happy with the regeneration proposals and about what this could mean for the estate as a whole."**

High Path resident

# For resident homeowners



**Regenerating your  
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# The Residents Offer

## For resident homeowners

**Existing resident homeowners are leaseholders and freeholders who currently live in a property in High Path as their main and principal home.**



### Housing options

As an existing resident homeowner you have three options:

1. sell us your home at market value plus ten per cent
2. a new replacement home in High Path (at no extra cost to you)
3. a shared equity option to help you own a new home in High Path.



### Selling and moving

#### **Market value plus ten per cent from 27 May 2015**

If you decide to sell us your existing home and move out of the area, we'll offer you market value plus an additional ten per cent. This ten per cent payment will be up to a maximum of £49,000. We'll also pay reasonable valuation, legal and relocation costs (see page 20).

This offer is available from 27 May 2015 up until any Compulsory Purchase Order is confirmed on your current home. You can sell your home when you want to move, without having to wait for the regeneration of your part of High Path. This gives you time and flexibility to plan for the future.

For details of how this valuation is calculated, please see page 19.



### A new replacement home in High Path

During the consultation on the Residents Offer, many existing homeowners told us they would like to stay living in High Path if regeneration goes ahead. Many were concerned about the possible cost of the new homes.

In response, we have prepared a replacement home option, which is tailored to meet the needs of High Path resident homeowners. It means you can choose a brand new home with the same number of bedrooms as your current home had when it was first built, at no extra cost to you.

You'll own the home outright from the start. In return, we hope you'll choose to stay living in High Path. If you sell your replacement home within 11 years, you'll need to repay some or all of the difference in the value between your new replacement home and your existing home. This is to encourage you to stay living in High Path.



### How the replacement home option works

We'll value your current home and agree a price with you. We'll take into account its condition, location and any improvements you've made. If you prefer, we'll pay for you to have your own independent valuation. For details of how valuations are calculated, please see page 19.

We'll offer you market value for your home plus an additional ten per cent up to a maximum of £49,000. We'll also pay any reasonable legal and other fees connected with the sale.

You'll then use the money you've received from us for your existing home and the additional ten per cent to own a new replacement home in High Path.

### Valuations

A new replacement home is likely to cost more than your existing home is worth.

Your existing home will be valued at the point when we reach agreement with you. We'll fix the cost of your new home at the same time. The value of your new home will be the same as the value it would sell for on the open market.



You won't have to pay the difference in value between your existing and new replacement home. You'll own your new replacement home as a freeholder or leaseholder, depending on the type of home that you buy.

### If you sell your new replacement home

If you sell your new home within 11 years you'll have to pay a proportion of the difference between the value of your new replacement home and existing home. That proportion reduces over time, so the longer you stay the less you will need to pay back. This will help keep the existing community together.

## Selling within 11 years

This table shows the difference you would have to repay between the values of your new replacement home and existing home.

5	Within five years of moving into your new home		100 per cent
6-7	In years six and seven		70 per cent
8-9	In years eight and nine		45 per cent
10-11	In years 10 and 11		20 per cent
11+	After year 11		Nil

## Increase in house prices

You can keep your share of any rise in the value of the home during this period, so you'll always benefit from any increase in house prices.

### A bigger or smaller home

You can choose to move to a replacement home with more or fewer bedrooms than your existing home had when it was first built.

If you'd like to move to a new replacement home that is smaller than your existing home we'll pay you

**£5,000**

for each bedroom you give up.

For example, if you have a three-bedroom flat and choose a new one-bedroom flat, we'll pay you an extra £10,000 for giving up those two bedrooms.

You can also buy a home with more bedrooms than you have. For example, if you have a three-bedroom home but want to buy a new four-bedroom home (subject to availability), you'll have to pay the difference in price between the value of a three-bedroom replacement home and the sale price of the larger four-bedroom home.



## Shared equity

In some circumstances, shared equity may be the best option for you. This will allow you to buy a share in a new home, with Circle Housing Merton Priory owning the rest.

As the new home is likely to cost more than your existing home is worth, Circle Housing Merton Priory will pay the difference and own a share of the equity in the new home.

You do not have to pay rent or interest on Circle Housing Merton Priory's share. You can increase your ownership in stages by gradually buying Circle Housing Merton Priory's equity share. There is no time limit on this.

### If you prefer a smaller new home

If you prefer, you can buy a smaller new home. This could mean you're able to afford a larger share of the equity in the new home.

### Selling a shared equity home

If you decide to sell your new home, you'll keep your share of the proceeds from the sale and Circle Housing Merton Priory will keep its share.

Any increase or decrease in value would be split between you and Circle Housing Merton Priory in line with our respective equity shares. For example, if you sell a shared equity home where you own 75 per cent, you would keep 75 per cent of the sale price, including 75 per cent of any increase in value.

## Stamp Duty

We will pay Stamp Duty Land Tax on a reasonable replacement property, up to the agreed value of your purchased property plus the additional payment.

## Service charge

The regeneration will have no effect on how your service charge is calculated.

You may move into a different type of home and there are likely to be new facilities, green spaces and improved communal areas. There will also be more people to contribute to service charges because of the additional homes. But service charges will continue to be set in line with the terms of your lease or freehold agreement.

## Valuing your existing home

The market value of your existing home will be based on a Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) valuation. The market value of your home takes into account:

- market conditions
- any changes in the value of homes in the surrounding area
- its condition inside
- any improvements made by you or previous owners (for example, new bathrooms and kitchens)
- local amenities (for example, schools, transport links, shops and services).

We'll arrange a professional valuation of your home by a member of RICS. We'll give you details of the market value in writing and confirm the disturbance payment and any other payments you're entitled to receive.

## Valuation fees

If you disagree with our valuation, we'll pay up to £650 plus VAT for you to get your own valuation from another RICS registered chartered surveyor. For details of independent chartered surveyors please contact RICS on 0870 333 1600 or go to [www.ricsfirms.com](http://www.ricsfirms.com)

The payment will be made when we get a copy of the valuation report prepared by a RICS registered chartered surveyor, which meets the current RICS Valuation Standards.

The valuation report must include:

- background, basis of instruction and valuation basis
- description and location of the property
- accommodation, including measurements
- construction and condition
- services
- charges and taxes
- planning and use restrictions
- details of comparable evidence
- opinion of property value.

If your independent valuation does not match ours, the two surveyors will negotiate an agreed, final market value.

## Legal fees

We'll reimburse your reasonable legal conveyancing costs up to a maximum of £750 plus VAT.



## Disturbance payment

We'll offer you

**£3,000**

to cover the costs of:

- redirecting mail (for up to one year)
- altering or replacing carpets and curtains
- disconnecting and reconnecting appliances such as washing machines
- disconnecting and reconnecting services such as phones and internet
- aids or adaptations that you need in your new home, such as ramps or grab rails.

## If you need to move temporarily

We'll always try to move you straight into your new home. For a very small number of existing resident homeowners this might not be possible. For example, if your existing home has to be demolished before your new replacement home is ready.

In some circumstances we may be able to offer a temporary Circle Housing Merton Priory home in High Path or in another part of Merton. If so, we'll try to find you a temporary home that's suitable and as close as possible to schools, workplaces, doctor's surgery or hospital according to your needs.

We won't charge you any rent for this temporary home, as long as you agree to the following:

- the market value of your existing home and ten per cent additional payment would be paid into a special account on your behalf (this is called an escrow account).

- the cost of your new home would be fixed at this point, so that the difference in value between your existing home and your new home does not change
- the escrow account would not pay you any interest
- you live in your temporary home under a licence agreement until your new home is ready

If you live in your temporary home for one year or longer, you'll be entitled to another £3,000 disturbance payment to help with your moving costs when you move into your new home.

You'll be responsible for and need to pay all relevant household bills for living in your temporary home, including Council Tax.

## Changing your mind

If you're in temporary accommodation but decide not to buy a home in High Path, the funds in the escrow account will be released to you. You can still claim reasonable and proportionate expenses or charges for purchase of a property elsewhere in the UK. This claim must be made within a year of leaving temporary accommodation.





Reasonable and proportionate expenses or charges include:

- surveyor's fees to acquire a replacement property
- survey fee and costs of transferring an existing mortgage or obtaining a new one
- solicitor's costs for a new property
- Stamp Duty Land Tax on a reasonable replacement property, up to the agreed value of your purchased property plus the additional payment
- mortgage redemption fees
- mortgage arrangement fees.

### Buying a home in another area

If you sell your existing home to us and move away from High Path, we'll reimburse reasonable conveyancing costs up to a maximum of £750 plus VAT and disbursements (for example, search fees).

You must claim this within 12 months of selling your existing home to Circle Housing Merton Priory.

### Compulsory purchase

We'll do all we can to reach an agreement with all homeowners to deliver the regeneration.

As a last resort we'll seek to acquire properties through Compulsory Purchase. This would only happen after any planning permissions are granted.

We would also have to satisfy the acquiring authority that there is a strong case for regeneration and acquisition of properties.

If your home is acquired by compulsory purchase, you won't be offered the replacement home or shared equity options.

If a Compulsory Purchase Order is in place, its terms and the legal requirements for compensation replace the Offer to resident homeowners outlined in this document. This means that if your home is subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order, you would be offered the open market value and a home loss payment of ten per cent (up to a maximum of £49,000, plus related fees and costs).



## New resident homeowners in High Path

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**New resident homeowners are leaseholders or freeholders who have completed the purchase of their home in High Path after 27 May 2015 but before the regeneration takes place, and who live in it as their principal home.**

We'll buy your home from you at any point before or during the construction period at its full, open market value.

We will also pay reasonable valuation, legal and relocation costs (see page 19).

If you're living in it as your main and principal home for one year before the point when we need to buy your home from you, we'll offer you market value (based on an independent valuation).

You can also take up the shared equity option to buy a new home in High Path but you won't be entitled to the replacement home option.

# For non-resident homeowners



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# The Residents Offer

## For non-resident homeowners

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**A non-resident homeowner is someone who owns a property in High Path but their principal home is elsewhere.**

If you're a non-resident homeowner, we'll offer you the open market value of your property (based on an independent valuation) plus a 7.5 per cent additional payment, up to a maximum of £75,000 (plus appropriate fees and disbursements).

This amount is equivalent to what you'd be entitled to under a Compulsory Purchase Order.

Before you decide to sell to us, please get independent advice about the possible tax implications and the options open to you.

### Compulsory Purchase

We'll do all we can to reach a negotiated agreement with all homeowners whose properties we need to buy to deliver the regeneration.



As a last resort we'll seek to acquire properties through Compulsory Purchase. This would only happen after any planning permissions are granted.

We would also have to satisfy the acquiring authority that there is a strong case for regeneration and acquisition of properties.

Once a Compulsory Purchase Order is in place, its terms and the legal requirements for compensation replace the Offer to non-resident homeowners in this document.

This means that if your property is subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order, you would only be offered the open market value and a basic loss payment of 7.5 per cent (up to a maximum of £75,000 plus related fees and costs).

### People living in your property

If you let your property in High Path, or have any other person living in it, you'll be responsible for serving any tenancy or other legal notices required to make the property available for vacant possession.

Circle Housing Merton Priory has no responsibility to re-house or compensate people living in existing homes belonging to non-resident homeowners.

We will offer free advice and support to your tenants.



# Our Ten Commitments

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## Circle Housing Merton Priory and Merton Council have made Ten Commitments to everyone affected by the regeneration plans.

The Ten Commitments are:

1. Circle Housing Merton Priory will consult with residents, consider their interests at all times, and address concerns fairly.
2. Current homeowners will be entitled to at least the market value of their home should they wish to take the option to sell their home to Circle Housing Merton Priory.
3. Current tenants will be entitled to be rehoused in a new home of appropriate size considering the number of people in the household.
4. Existing Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants will keep all their rights and have the same tenancy agreement, including rent levels, in the new neighbourhood as they do now.
5. All new properties will be more energy efficient and easier to heat than existing properties, helping to keep down residents' fuel bills.
6. Circle Housing Merton Priory will keep disruption to a minimum, and will do all it can to ensure residents only move once if it is necessary to house them temporarily while their new home is being built.
7. Circle Housing Merton Priory will offer extra help and support for older people and/or disabled residents throughout the regeneration works.
8. Circle Housing Merton Priory will continue to maintain the homes of residents across the three neighbourhoods throughout the planning process until regeneration starts, including ensuring a high quality responsive repairs service.
9. Any growth in the number of homes will be in accordance with the council's Development Plan so that it is considered, responsible and suitable for the area.
10. As a not for profit organisation, Circle Housing Merton Priory will not profit from any regeneration and will use any surplus to provide more housing or improve existing neighbourhoods.

**“We’re committed to working in partnership with Merton Council and the wider community, especially local residents whose long-term needs are central to our proposals.”**

Sir Robin Young,  
chairman of  
Circle Housing





A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines spaced evenly down the page.

# Contact us

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I'm here to help. Please contact me on 020 3441 8518 or [High Path@circle.org.uk](mailto:HighPath@circle.org.uk)



For the latest news about the regeneration plans, please see [www.mertonregen.org.uk](http://www.mertonregen.org.uk)

**Donna Brown**  
regeneration officer

## Alternative formats

If you'd like to have the Residents Offer in large print, Braille, audio or any other format or language, please call 020 3441 8518.

For Text Relay calls from a textphone, please dial 18001 followed by the number you wish to contact.

You can also get free, independent advice from the independent tenant and resident advisor at NewmanFrancis on:

**0800 644 6040**

(freephone from landlines)

**020 855 2139**

or [mertonregen@newmanfrancis.org](mailto:mertonregen@newmanfrancis.org)



Merton Priory