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Winter Fuel Appeal from welfare charity Wimbledon Guild

Local social welfare charity Wimbledon Guild is appealing for extra help this winter to support those in need across Merton.

Wimbledon Guild's annual Winter Fuel Appeal gives more fortunate members of the community the opportunity to donate their payment to help those who may be struggling.

The charity, based on Worple Road, is asking Merton residents who are in receipt of the state Winter Fuel Payment but who are not facing hardship to consider donating their annual government allowance to one of the borough's leading charities

Chief executive, Wendy Pridmore said: "There is very real hardship all across our borough which we see and try to help each day. There may be people who qualify for the Winter Fuel Payment but may feel more comfortable knowing the money will be used to heat the home of someone less well off. Our charity can help make that happen. Donating the allowance to Wimbledon Guild really does make a life changing difference to people and ensures they are kept warm and comfortable during otherwise difficult winter months."

Pridmore continued: "We had a case earlier this year that highlighted how donations for Winter Fuel Allowance helped Carol*, you can read her story below. And Carol's case is not a 'one-off' situation for us. In winter we see this occur all too often."

Carol was 90 years old when her boiler was replaced at her flat in January 2017. She was relieved as the weather was turning bitterly cold and her old boiler was unreliable. Unfortunately, a few days later the new boiler broke leaving Carol in a freezing flat with no heating or hot water. She called the boiler company time and time again but they refused to return her calls, her family lived far away and could not help. With increasing poor health and daily hospital appointments to attend, Carol did not know where to turn. Then one day, a doctor recommended she contact Wimbledon Guild. They talked through her situation, provided a portable heater and contacted the boiler company ensuring they reinstated her heating.

Carol said: "I ended up without heating for a month. When you have no one to turn to, you realise how alone you are. Wimbledon Guild helped me so much and I cannot thank them enough for their support. The people of Merton are lucky to have such a great organization on their doorstep. "

Winter Fuel Payment (WFP) was introduced in 1997 aimed at tackling fuel poverty amongst pensioners. It is an annual tax-free payment of between £100 and £300 to those eligible to help meet the costs of heating their homes in winter.

More than 12million people received WFP in 2016/17 a drop of 189,000 on the previous year.

A payment is generally made between November and December but can extend until the end of March. Automatic entitlement is based on an individual being in receipt of State Pension or another social security benefit, and born on or before 5th August 1953.

The payment amount is based on individual circumstances during the qualifying week, which is usually in September. Further information about the WFP can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

To donate via our website click here

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/wimbledonguild/winterfuelappeal>

or telephone: 0208 946 0735 or send a cheque to:

The Wimbledon Guild,
Winter Fuel,
Guild House,
30/32 Worple Road,
Wimbledon,
London SW19 4EF

To make your donation go even further, contact Wimbledon Guild for a gift aid form.

The Wimbledon Guild holds supporting ageing as one of three core aims alongside tackling poverty and encouraging mental well-being. In this economic climate, the need for these services has never been greater.

Visit wimbledonguild.co.uk

**At Wimbledon Guild we respect everyone who comes to us for help – and many are working toward a fresh start in life. So while their stories are true, client names have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for your understanding.*

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Note to editors:

About Wimbledon Guild

Wimbledon Guild improves the lives of people in Merton by empowering the development of mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

From its base at Guild House on Worple Road, Wimbledon, it offers a significant number of services across the community to make a positive difference to everyone irrespective of age or background. Whether it's feeling valued, being more active, thinking clearly, feeling confident about the future, having contact with others or an interest in new things – the focus is making a difference to their lives.

The services Wimbledon Guild offer includes:

- Transport, benefits and housing support
- Counselling services
- Bereavement support
- Small grants
- Clubs, classes, talks and trips
- HomeFood Café
- Befriending and volunteering

Wimbledon Guild's vital work in the local community can only continue through the generosity of the general public and rely heavily on donations and support from local people and businesses.

www.wimbledonguild.co.uk

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