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ANNUAL COUNCIL

4 JUNE 2014

(19.15 - 20.28)

PRESENT The Mayor Krystal Miller
The Deputy Mayor: Councillor John Sargeant
Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Councillor Stephen Alambritis,
Councillor Mark Allison, Councillor Stan Anderson,
Councillor Laxmi Attawar, Councillor Hamish Badenoch,
Councillor John Bowcott, Councillor Michael Bull, Councillor Adam Bush,
Councillor Tobin Byers, Councillor Charlie Chirico, Councillor David Chung,
Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Councillor Pauline Cowper,
Councillor Stephen Crowe, Councillor Mary Curtin, Councillor David Dean,
Councillor John Dehaney, Councillor Nick Draper, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Fidelis Gadzama,
Councillor Ross Garrod, Councillor Suzanne Grocott, Councillor Jeff Hanna,
Councillor Joan Henry, Councillor Daniel Holden, Councillor James Holmes,
Councillor Janice Howard, Councillor Mary-Jane Jeanes,
Councillor Abigail Jones, Councillor Philip Jones, Councillor Andrew Judge,
Councillor Sally Kenny, Councillor Linda Kirby, Councillor Abdul Latif,
Councillor Najeeb Latif, Councillor Brian Lewis-Lavender,
Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Councillor Edith Macauley,
Councillor Russell Makin, Councillor Maxi Martin, Councillor Peter McCabe,
Councillor Oonagh Moulton, Councillor Ian Munn, Councillor Katy Neep,
Councillor Dennis Pearce, Councillor John Sargeant,
Councillor Judy Saunders, Councillor David Simpson,
Councillor Marsie Skeete, Councillor Peter Southgate,
Councillor Geraldine Stanford, Councillor Linda Taylor,
Councillor Imran Uddin, Councillor Gregory Udeh, Councillor Peter Walker,
Councillor Jill West, Councillor Martin Whelton and
Councillor David Williams

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

No apologies for absence were received.

Councillor Fidelis Gadzama, sent his apologies that he would be arriving late.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No declarations were received.

3. ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2014/ 2015 (Agenda Item 3)

The Mayor called for nominations for the office of Mayor for 2014-2015.

It was moved by Councillor Stephen Alambritis, and seconded by Councillor Edith Macauley that Councillor Agatha Akyigyina be elected as Mayor for 2014-2015

Councillors Oonagh Moulton and Peter Southgate addressed the meeting expressing their support for the nomination.

There not being any other nominations the Mayor put the motion to the meeting and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

That Councillor Agatha Akyigyina is the duly elected Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for the Municipal year 2014-2015.

Councillor Agatha Akyigyina made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office and was invested with the Mayor's chain and badge of office.

The Mayor announced that her Deputy Mayor of the Municipal year 2014-2015 would be Councillor Laxmi Attawar.

Councillor Laxmi Attawar signed the declaration of acceptance of office and was invested with the Deputy Mayor's badge of office.

The Mayor announced that her consorts would be Councillor Charles Ocansey, Teresa Ocansey and Charlie Ocansey.

The Mayor announced that her Chaplain as Father Patrick from Catholic Church of Our lady of the Assumption.

The Deputy Mayor announced that his consort would be Rami Attawar and Sally Rance.

The Mayor presented badges to the outgoing Mayor and Mayoress.

The Mayor, Councillor Agatha Akyigyina, thanked Council for her election for the forthcoming year. The Mayor stated that her charities would be 'Merton Street Pastors and Shooting Star Chase.

4. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING MAYOR (Agenda Item 5)

The Mayor invited former Councillor Krystal Miller to the dais to receive the Council's vote of thanks.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis, moved and the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Oonagh Moulton, seconded the vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor.

In doing so both Group Leaders and the Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents Group, Councillor Peter Southgate spoke in praise of Krystal Miller's year in office. A copy of all their speeches is attached as appendix A to their minutes. Councillor

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Krystal Miller, for the dedicated manner in which she has served as Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for the year 2013-2014.

Mayoral Citation:

Councillor Krystal Miller Mayor of Merton 2013-2014

At the time of her election as Mayor in May 2013, Councillor Miller had completed seven years as a councillor for Trinity Ward in Wimbledon. She has been a hands-on, community-focused and energetic mayor, undertaking many charity fundraising events and numerous civic engagements.

The Mayor's main charities for 2013-2014 were 'Home Start Merton' and the Polka Theatre. With both charities working to help children in Merton, the Mayor has been very focused on the development of the borough's young people. Councillor Miller supported several school and youth theatre events during her mayoral year as well as meeting with many Merton parents through her charities.

As a youthful and innovative Mayor, Councillor Miller challenged mayoral traditions by volunteering in manual work, developing her own creative material for events and engaging with people on social media, as well as making an admirable move to have a multi-faith representative giving the opening prayers at the council meetings she chaired. Balancing working life with charity efforts, Councillor Miller worked hard during her mayoralty to raise in the region of £40,000 for her charities.

The Mayor organised a variety of events that were great fun, including a quiz night, a 'Rock Choir' concert, Christmas celebration as well as the annual Mayor's Ball. This last event had a 'Love Merton' theme to highlight the good work that residents and volunteers do in Merton to make the borough a better place. Over 200 guests helped raise more than £19,000 at the ball.

The Mayor was proud to represent the borough at civic events throughout the year, including the commemoration of Remembrance Day, Armed Forces Day, a Nelson Mandela Memorial Service and the London Mayor's Association Annual Civic Service event at the Abbey of Westminster.

The Mayor is particularly noted for her focus on volunteering and often took a hands-on approach in her support of various charitable events throughout the year. During Christmas, she helped the Doxa Deo Church to pack up over 500 hampers to go to families in need across the borough. The Mayor also worked with volunteers to clear out a disused area at the back of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Mitcham to make the centre a nicer place for residents to visit.

Working to highlight and support the work of local businesses in the borough, the Mayor hosted many business receptions to give Merton entrepreneurs a platform to network with each other and share their ideas. The Mayor worked alongside the local Guardian newspaper on the Merton Civic Awards and selected a local hero to win the Outstanding Achievement award.

The Mayor was delighted to welcome the first Prudential Ride London cycling festival to the borough where a member of Merton Council's staff cycled on behalf of the Mayor's charities, helping to raise more funds through sponsorship. During her mayoralty, Councillor Miller also unveiled the first digital photo archive with over 15,000 images of the borough's past through the Merton Memories website, helping people to discover the borough's history. She also opened the new spa at Wimbledon Leisure Centre, in her own ward.

The Mayor's workload and achievements over her mayoral year would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of her Deputy Mayor, Councillor John Sargeant, and his wife, Deputy Mayoress Mrs Judy Sargeant. Between the Mayor and her Deputy, they have attended around 250 engagements.

The Mayor was ably and lovingly supported by her husband and Principal Consort Councillor Henry Nelless and her father and Consort Mr Kenneth Miller, family, and friends – without whom she could not have achieved so much in her year.

Mayor Miller is recognised by the council for her skill in chairing council meetings as well as her hard work, creativity and dedication to her charitable activities, and for her work representing the London Borough of Merton as a whole. Her personal qualities of organisation, ambition and good humour contributed to her very successful year in Merton.

Krystal Miller responded to the vote of thanks referring to a number of events and experiences during her mayoral year. She placed on record her thanks to a number of individuals for their support during her term of office, including the deputy mayor and the mayor's office support staff. (A copy of her speech is included within Appendix B to these minutes)

A framed copy of the citation together with a past Mayor's badge was presented to Krystal Miller.

5. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda Item 7)

The Mayor asked for nominations for the position of Leader of the Council.

It was moved by Councillor Mark Allison and seconded by Councillor Marsie Skeete that Councillor Stephen Alambritis be elected Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Stephen Alambritis to be the duly elected Leader of the Council.

6. VOTE OF THANKS TO FORMER COUNCILLORS (Agenda Item 8)

It was moved by Councillor Stephen Alambritis and seconded by Councillor James Holmes that, following their retirement from membership of the Council, the Council places on record its sincere appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the Borough by the former members listed in the appendix to these minutes and extends to them its grateful thanks for their activities on behalf of the Borough.

7. MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 2 APRIL 2014 (Agenda Item 9)

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2014 are agreed as a correct record

8. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 2 APRIL 2014 (Agenda Item 10)

That the Minutes of the special meeting of the Council held on 2 April 2014 are agreed as a correct record

9. CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Stephen Alambritis moved the report, which was seconded by Councillor Mark Allison.

The Mayor put the recommendations to the vote.

Following a requested it was recorded that the following Members did not vote on the resolution, Councillors Hamish Badenoch, John Bowcott, Michael Bull, Adam Bush, Charlie Chirico, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, Suzanne Grocott, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Janice Howard, Abdul Latif, Najeeb Latif, Brian Lewis-Lavender, Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Oonagh Moulton, David Simpson, Linda Taylor, Jill West and David Williams

RESOLVED

That Council

- A) approves the constitution of committees, sub-committees and scrutiny bodies, and agrees the allocation of seats, chair and vice-chair positions and appoints members to those seats; as set out in Appendix A the submitted report;
- B) approves the constitution of consultative forums and other bodies and appoints members to those seats; as set out in Appendix B the submitted report;
- C). approves the allocation of seats and appoints to the outside organisations as set out in Appendix C the submitted report;
- D). approves the terms of reference of consultative and other bodies for which the Council is responsible as set out in Appendix D the submitted report
- E) notes the appointment made by the Leader of his the Deputy Leader and Cabinet and their respective portfolios, as set out in Appendix E the submitted report
- F). notes that, in respect of the Mayor of Merton's Charitable Trust, Councillor David Williams and former Councillor Krystal Miller have resigned with effect 5 June 2014 and also notes the appointment of the incoming Mayor Councillor Agatha Akyigyina and Deputy Mayor Councillor Laxmi Attawar, as trustees from 5 June 2014; and
- G). agrees to delegate to the Planning Applications Committee the authority to appoint a non-voting co-opted member if this is deemed appropriate.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis

I am delighted to give the vote of thanks in citation for outgoing Mayor, Councillor Krystal Miller. You have the citation, but I want to add, subtract, bend it, squeeze it, stretch it, and say more things about Krystal Miller's wonderful year. At the time of her election, Councillor Miller had completed seven years as a Trinity ward councillor. She has been a hands on, community focussed, energetic and hugely professional Mayor. She has been undertaking many charity fundraising events and numerous civic engagements. The Mayor's main charities were 'Homestart Merton' and the 'Polka Theatre'. With both charities working to help the children of Merton, the Mayor has been focussed on the development of the borough's young people. Councillor Miller has supported several school and youth theatre events. As a youthful and innovative Mayor, Councillor Miller has challenged the old traditions; volunteering in manual work in developing and creating material for her events and engaging with young people on social media. Krystal has also made the admirable move in having a multi-faith representative giving the opening prayers at the council meetings she chaired.

Councillor Miller worked hard during her Mayoralty to raise in the region of £45,000 for her charities. Her two charities were handed their respective cheques only last week, and even there we were rocking all over the world in Wimbledon Broadway to the seventy strong 'Rock Choir'. The Mayor organised a variety of events that were great fun including the Mayor's Annual Ball. This event had a 'Love Merton' theme to highlight the good work that residents and volunteers are doing to make the borough a better place. Over 200 guests helped raise a lot of dosh. The Mayor was proud to represent the borough at civic events throughout the year, including the Nelson Mandela memorial service, and I personally was honoured to join her at the signing of the council's condolence book for 'Madiba'. The Mayor is particularly noted for her focus on volunteering and often took a 'hands on' approach, much to the great surprise of Carl Brown, the Mayor's attendant. Indeed, to the even greater surprise of Steve Vincent, the Mayor's second attendant, and certainly to the humungous and delightful surprise of Carol Vincent, the Mayor's personal executive assistant. As an illustration, let us go back to that Mayor's Ball. I was there. It raised just shy of £20,000. The ballroom at the AELTC was wonderfully decorated. Who do you think had made Carl get up at 5am to go to Covent Garden with them to buy the freshest of flowers? It wasn't Interflora. Who do you think sat down and made the floral decorations? It wasn't Lansdale florist down the road. Who do you think designed all the posters and flyers for the ball – and the advertising, for the 'Love Merton' ball? It was not Martin Sorrell. Madam Mayor, it was Krystal Miller. Yes it was she who was there at Covent Garden at the break of dawn, picking flowers no doubt all the way from Holland. Yes, it was she who made all the floral decorations. It was she who came up with the theme for the ball and all the flyers and posters, and in the so doing of, saved this council money.

During Christmas, Krystal also helped the Doxa Deo Church pack up 500 hampers for families in need across the borough. The offering was beautifully called 'Lunch on Jesus'. Working to highlight and support the work of local businesses in the borough, the Mayor also hosted many business receptions to give the Merton entrepreneurs a

platform to work on. The Mayor worked alongside the local Guardian newspaper on the civic awards and selected a number of local heroes for achievement awards. The Mayor was also kind enough to allow me to host a Lebanese come Greek come Turkish night at Leyla's restaurant. Whatever title we put to it, there was delicious food, Eastern entertainment with a belly dancer', so it must have been a Lebanese come Greek come Turkish night, anyway, it raised a lot of money for good charities. The Mayor was also delighted to welcome the first Prudential Ride London cycle to the borough and this also helped raise money for charity by sponsoring one of the riders who happened to be one of our members of staff.

During her Mayoralty, Councillor Miller also unveiled the first digital photo album from the archive with over 15000 images of the borough's past through the Merton Memories website, helping people to discover the borough's history. She also put a new spark into Wimbledon leisure centre in her own ward. The Mayor's work and many achievements over the past year would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor John Sargeant, and his wife, Deputy Mayoress, Mrs Judy Sargeant. Between the Mayor and the Deputy they have attended around 250 engagements. The Mayor was also ably and lovingly supported by her husband and principal consort, Councillor Henry Nelless, and her father and consort, Mr Kenneth Miller, and family and friends, without whom she could not have achieved so much in her year.

Madam Mayor, former Mayor Councillor Miller is recognised by the council for her skill in chairing council meetings as well as her hard work, creativity and dedication to her charitable activities and for her work in representing the London Borough of Merton as a whole. Her personal qualities of organisation and ambition and good humour contributed to a successful year for Merton. Madam Mayor, you know I am Greek and one of my favourite restaurants is called the Real Greek. Now Madam Mayor, you and I know that Krystal is not a real Greek, but for the last year, here in the London Borough of Merton, First Citizen of the Borough, Councillor Krystal Miller, has been the real professional. We now need to resolve unanimously that this council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Krystal Miller for the dedicated manner in which she has represented the borough for the year 2013/14.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton

It gives me great pleasure to second the vote of thanks for Councillor Krystal Miller's achievements as our Mayor over the past year, and to record our thanks to her and her wonderful principal consort Henry Nelles, and also to her father and consort, Mr Miller, along with our thanks to the past deputy Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor John and Judy Sargeant.

The citation lists the achievements of a memorable and highly successful year. The Mayor herself stated that she, along with the deputy, had attended some 500 events. Also, the sum of £45000 was raised and handed over to the Mayor's two charities, 'Polka Theatre' and 'Homestart Merton', at the 'Thank You' concert on Sunday.

Mayors over the years have had many different styles, but I would like to highlight the innovative and professional skills she has brought to the role. I think we have all been particularly touched by the prayers before council, lead over the year by representatives of different faiths from across the borough. I know she has inspired many of us to attend community events, and join groups which we might not have done without her, and that even includes my husband attending a rousing Rock Choir concert, and joining in, and who now performs with them including at that last event.

Above all, I commend her energy and enthusiasm, for taking an active role in all the events and not least in working with volunteers herself, for instance, in packing up the hampers which were then distributed to families in special need across the borough. She has also excelled with her fundraising events, most notably with the Mayor's Ball, for which she gave a 'Love Merton' theme, and raised in excess of £19000.

All this culminated in the 'Thank You' event bringing together charities and organisations working across the borough, many of whom have been recognised here tonight. I think special praise should go to all the volunteers that make up our richly diverse borough. I would also like to add my own personal thanks, as leader of the conservative group, for the energetic way she has inspired us all. She deserves our sincere thanks for her hard work, and also for representing the residents of Trinity ward during her years as councillor. She will be missed, and she leaves with our very warm wishes and I am sure that her talents will be recognised for many years to come.

Councillor Peter Southgate

Ever since I have been a member of this council I think it is fair to say our Mayors have blossomed. They reveal themselves as exceptional individuals during their year in office. Councillor Krystal Miller has lived up to that tradition in every respect as the First Citizen of our Borough. Her year in office got off to a rather dramatic start, and not in a good way when the ceremonial aspect of the Annual Council meeting was disrupted by a rather staged defection from the conservative ranks. Until then I had always thought of Councillor Miller as one of our more demure councillor ladies, but she certainly showed her steely determination not to be usurped that night. We came to know and admire that in the council meetings in the months that followed.

Fortunately, there is more to the Mayor's life than chairing council meetings. For me, the tone that it was going to be a fun year was set early on by the 'Rock Choir' and their concert on Edge Hill. The seventy or so ladies and two token men do have a lot of fun and certainly pack a lot of emotional punch into their performance and carry the audience along with them – go and hear them if you can. It is really fitting that the Mayoralty ended as it began, with a performance by the 'Rock Choir' on Sunday at the Polka Theatre, and as part of the celebration of her year in office. And there was fun in between, I think I can say with all honesty particularly the best ever Mayor's Christmas, by the catering students at Merton College, the Lebanese Evening, already mentioned, and of course a memorable Mayor's Ball at the AELTCC. Not only was the setting perfect, but it also helped take our minds off campaigning. One innovation Councillor Miller has introduced as Mayor that I will commend to her successor is the two minute speech for members in council. Council meetings might change in the term ahead, but really as a fair way to have all motions and amendments to be debated the two minute speech has a lot going for it. It's also an excellent discipline on members have to keep their speeches short and concise.

If you will indulge me, I would also like to include the deputy Mayor, my fellow ward councillor and good friend John Sargeant, and his wife Judy. John has shown the ability to tailor a meaningful speech in a way for people to remember afterwards and I remember people commenting to him afterwards about that. So let us include the deputy Mayor and Mayoress in this vote of thanks to the Mayor, on behalf of this council.

Krystal Miller Speech on here Year as the Mayor.

Those were incredibly kind words. I remember sitting in the chamber eight years ago as a new councillor, and listening to Judy Saunders give a speech. At that time I didn't really understand the role of Mayor, but definitely took away that she had had a lot of fun, and so have I. You get to recognise local heroes, raise money for good causes, meet the most interesting people and go to some fabulous events – what's not to love? Every single week the Deputy Mayor and I met people who have inspired us in our community, and during our more than 500 events, we've attended those who were there to help, those who were there to entertain and those who helped young people get engaged and historic groups that preserve the best of our past. The fundraisers and the faith groups and behind every single one of these groups is an army of volunteers who make it all possible. I was always delighted to meet them, and learning more about what they do and how they make a difference to Merton, and no one should underestimate just how much difference this army of volunteers makes. It was a great pleasure to host small groups at receptions in the Mayor's parlour to say thank you. It was a small gesture, but I guess one of the things you can do to say thank you. So in the last couple of months we have had the team in who launched the Christmas lunch initiative, school governors, street pastors, and the Volunteer Centre Merton.

I was pleased to host many community groups at the concert on Sunday to say thank you. John and I also had lots of visits from schools, Brownies and Cubs and unsurprisingly given the theme for my year, it was the experience I enjoyed most. The most popular questions were whether I lived in a palace, whether the chain was real and crucially, do I like hamsters? The children had boundless energy and you couldn't help but leave the room smiling. My focus on children was reflected in my charities, 'Homestart Merton' and the 'Polka Theatre' and I was very pleased to announce on Sunday that I had raised £45000 in my year. I hope that any balance from my year will go to the Charitable Trust set up by Councillor Williams, so that the new Mayor and new trustees will put it to good use. Thank you so much to everyone who attended an event, bought a raffle ticket or gave a donation. Every pound counts and I know both charities were so pleased and you have really helped improve the lives of children in our borough and I think that is brilliant. Now I have a few thank yous to say so bear with me.

Firstly, Carl. As there are quite a few new councillors, a word of warning, Carl must be obeyed and this even applies if you are Mayor. I think sometimes people just invite the Mayor to see Carl actually. At the Arthritis Care Christmas Party he was there, fixing a lamp I think, and my phone began to ring. I thought, 'this is odd, as Henry knows I am on official duty', it rang, and it rang again. Anyway, after the seventh ring I thought, 'perhaps it is important'. It was Henry, he had broken down in the middle of the road and only I had the car breakdown details. I don't think the lady at Arthritis Care will ever forgive me for dragging Carl away. Carl, thank you for caring about the Mayoralty and for doing things properly. You help the Mayor to take it that bit more seriously too and if we can't take it seriously, you can't expect others to. I am sure that the position is still held in such high regard within Merton. Carol –

again for new councillors, Carol started in the Mayor's office just as I began and I feel incredibly lucky that she did. She has the most delightful and cheerful phone voice you will ever hear. If you haven't rung the Mayor's office you should do so just to hear it. In fact, in future, when I'm having a bad day, I'm going to ring Carol because the moment you hear her voice you feel better. I'm sure our joint passion for organising events must have, at times, driven Carl, Steve and John mad as we decided what colour napkins we needed for the next event. Carol, it was great fun, thank you and thank you to the entire Vincent family who always come out in force for every single event. Thank you to Ged, Julia and Chris Pedlow for all their advice, to Michelle in finance for looking after the numbers, to Sophie and all the comms team and all the other officers who helped me in some way, who gave me advice on some issue or fundraising which for the Mayor's charities. The Mayoralty is extremely lucky to have such support across the whole officer team.

Thank you to Andrew Wakefield, for being Andrew, and for giving your support to having representatives of other faiths at council meetings. It would have been a much tougher challenge to arrange without your support and I am extremely grateful that you were able to help make this idea a reality. Thank you to John for being such a fantastic deputy, I think we had a shared view of wanting to work with local businesses and I think we made a few steps in that direction. It was wonderful to have someone of John's experience to bounce ideas off, and he always had some good words of advice. Thank you to Judy as well for her continued support at various receptions that we did. It's been a pleasure to get to know you both over the last twelve months and I do hope you stay in touch. Thank you to my mum and dad sitting in the corner – they both retired in early 2013 and both thought their life was going to get a little bit quieter - little did they realise. There has been a lot of traipsing up and down the motorway to Kent for the fundraising. It's been lovely to spend so much time together, and I can promise you can now enjoy your retirement. Thank you to Henry, I probably can't say any more or I'll cry. Despite the difficulties, I would recommend the role of Mayor to anyone. It's been an absolute privilege and I have enjoyed every second, even the difficult ones. I know that Councillor Akyigyina will be a wonderful Mayor and if you have only half the fun I did, you will have an amazing year.

Thank you.