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COUNCIL
2 APRIL 2014
(21.30 - 21.40)

PRESENT

Councillor Krystal Miller, (in the Chair),
Councillor John Sargeant, Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Councillor Mark Allison,
Councillor Stan Anderson, Councillor Laxmi Attawar,
Councillor Mark Betteridge, Councillor John Bowcott,
Councillor Margaret Brierly, Councillor Richard Chellew,
Councillor David Chung, Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah,
Councillor John Dehaney, Councillor Nick Draper,
Councillor Iain Dysart, Councillor Chris Edge,
Councillor Suzanne Evans, Councillor Karin Forbes,
Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Samantha George,
Councillor Suzanne Grocott, Councillor Maurice Groves,
Councillor Jeff Hanna, Councillor Richard Hilton,
Councillor James Holmes, Councillor Janice Howard,
Councillor Mary-Jane Jeanes, Councillor Philip Jones,
Councillor Andrew Judge, Councillor Linda Kirby,
Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender, Councillor Logie Lohendran,
Councillor Edith Macauley, Councillor Russell Makin,
Councillor Maxi Martin, Councillor Peter McCabe,
Councillor Diane Neil Mills, Councillor Oonagh Moulton,
Councillor Ian Munn, Councillor Henry Nelles,
Councillor Dennis Pearce, Councillor Judy Saunders,
Councillor Linda Scott, Councillor Rod Scott,
Councillor David Simpson, Councillor Debbie Shears,
Councillor Peter Southgate, Councillor Linda Taylor,
Councillor Sam Thomas, Councillor Ray Tindle,
Councillor Gregory Udeh, Councillor Peter Walker,
Councillor Martin Whelton, Councillor David Williams,
Councillor Richard Williams and Councillor Miles Windsor

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors David Dean, Geraldine Stanford and Simon Withey

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

No Declarations were made

3. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH (Agenda Item 3)

The Mayor invited each of the Political Group Leaders to speak upon the Motion

Councillor Alambritis- –

It is with great pleasure I was asked by this Council to write to Andy Murray, to Virginia Wade, to Ann Jones and to Mrs Mortimer with regard to an offer of Freedom of the Borough. That was done on the 18 December 2013. The response from Angela Barrett nee Mortimer was 'I shall be delighted and honoured to be honoured Freeman of Merton'. Virginia Wade's response, 'Thank you it is a very nice invitation and will be in touch and it is an affirmative. Ann Jones 'Delighted to accept this titled of honoured Freeman of the Borough of Merton' and through Andy Murray's office, another acceptance of the offer.

With regard to this, it with great pleasure the honour is bestowed upon them and not us. With regard to Andy Murray this is in recognition of being a British Winner of the Men's Singles Tennis Championship in the Wimbledon Grand Slam event in 2013. It also for being a gold and silver medallist in London 2012 Olympic tennis event played here in Merton. Andy Murray has brought significant reputational benefits to Merton as a place to visit and a good place to live, work and play. As well as enhancing Merton's reputation, he has also made a major contribution to the development of British tennis and has raised the profile of here in Merton, and across the land.

With regards to our three great Wimbledon Women's champions, it something we wanted to put in place, something we wanted to correct, something we want to look to be, a Council that is steeped in equalities and therefore with great pleasure they are also offered Freedom of the Borough, for their great achievement and also for their work on tennis throughout the Borough ever since then.

Councillor Moulton –

It is a great honour as Leader of the Conservative Group to be seconding the motion, before this Special Meeting and to confer the honour of Freedom of the Borough on these great winners of British Singles Tennis Championships at Wimbledon.

Firstly to Andy Murray for recognition for winning the Men's Singles Tennis Championship in 2013 at Wimbledon, and for being the inspirational Men's Olympic Singles gold medallist and Doubles silver medallist at the London 2012 Olympics that was held at Wimbledon. His contribution to the development of British tennis and a role model for up and coming sports men and women as been really huge across our Borough and has raised the profile and reputation of Merton in so doing.

We also seek to bestow the honour of Freedom of the Borough upon Virginia Wade, Ann Hayden Jones and Angela Mortimer as British winners of the Ladies single tennis Championships at Wimbledon in 1977, 1969 and 1961 respectively. They have all brought significant reputational benefits to Merton and made major contributions to the development and profile of the sport, and particularly for tennis for British players

and for women in all sport. On behalf of the Conservative Group I'm delighted to second this motion.

Councillor Evans –

I can't play tennis for toffee and I never could or will be able to. But long before I even dreamed of living in Wimbledon, let alone representing the area as a local Councillor, I was completely head over heels in love with the Wimbledon tennis tournament. My passion for it started when I was a child and has never diminished. Normally my mother would find me with my nose in a book but for those two weeks during Wimbledon tennis fortnight she could not turn me away from the television. The earliest players I remember and my heroes were the feisty John McEnroe, the slightly edgy flippant and irrepressively manly Ilie Nastase, the positively heavenly Andre Agassi who made all the girls swoon and the astonishingly cool Martina Navratilova and of course the elegantly and charming Virginia Wade, who had an understated poise that belied her inexorable determination. It's her who I see in my mind's eye when I imagine the lady's single champion raising that magnificent silver salver.

But oddly enough my first visit to centre court took place in October at a time where no-one was playing and the silent empty court which exuded trial, battle and conquest, that left me spellbound. There is a magic about that space even the professional players know there is something especially powerful about winning on the hallowed grass courts of Wimbledon. When they lift the trophy there, it somehow is especially meaningful. I'm told the gentlemen's trophy has inscribed on it the words 'I am the All England Lawn Tennis Club single handed champion of the World' It's that kind of sentiment that made Britain great, so when a Great Britain wins a singles title it is all the more glorious for them and for us. The honour we give tonight to Angela, Ann and Virginia is long overdue and for Andy who broke a 77 year jinx, it is an absolute must. I am proud to support them all as Honorary Freeman of the Borough, as are my colleagues.

Councillor Southgate –

I guess it is true to say that lawn tennis and the Borough have been inseparable, really since the late 19th Century. The first championships of the All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club played on the original ground by the railway in Wimbledon in 1877. It is interesting to see that tennis gained the upper hand as by 1899 it became the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club.

As a child who, I lived in Wimbledon Park I can remember a warm summers evening the sounds of the applause would travel across the lake until the fading light stopped play. There was a sense of excitement about that living so close to event that you knew was being followed across the world. That sense of excitement never really elapses. You might say that you have left it rather a long time to honour these four great players who have done so much for British tennis and help to make Wimbledon the foremost international tournament which it is today. But we are putting that right now and from a personal note the moment I saw Andy Murray win the gold at the Olympics, I just knew Wimbledon would finally be within his grasp and so it proved

to be last summer. All four of these players do deserve this as it the highest honour we can bestow on them.

Councillor Dysart –

It gives me great pleasure to associate the Lib Dem group with this motion. Knowing that Fred Perry had been the last British Men's Wimbledon winner I had hoped but not expected to see another men's victory in my life time. It seemed that a few notably 'tiger' Tim Henman might be there or thereabouts, but no further. However that glorious sunny Sunday afternoon will remain in our memories. Andy Murray showed the hunger guts, willpower and sheer determination to succeed to win, not unlikely some politicians. It was such a proud moment and just for the following day Merton was renamed as Murraytown. He had recent form triumphing at the 2012 Olympics which the sun also made an appearance despite taking more holidays that year I recall and the US Open a few months later. So who said this country no longer produced tennis winner.

How fitting that Virginia Wade won Wimbledon in the Queen's Silver Jubilee Year in 1977. I can recall our school middle class begging to be let home early to watch the final, but being refused. But there was plenty to talk about the next day at least. We asked the teacher whether Ms Wade would come to the school again to sign autographs, though we were naturally told she would be far too busy. Ann Jones and Angela Mortimer are before my time but I know they hold a dear place in British tennis. I believed Ann Jones still commentates. Soon we'll be asking when will we have our next Ladies Champion, currently it stands at 37 years and counting. Hopefully we won't have to wait as long as we did for the Men's. Congratulations to all named in this motion, who thoroughly deserve this accolade and who made our residents and our country extremely proud.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the Motion and reminded the Council that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, it requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Freeman to be bestowed.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

The substantive resolution was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That, by virtue of the power vested in it by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council does admit Andy Murray, Virginia Wade, Ann Haydon-Jones and Angela Mortimer as Freeman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of their achievements in winning a singles title at Wimbledon.

This honour is bestowed on Andy Murray in recognition of his being a British Winner of the Mens Singles Tennis Championship at the Wimbledon Grand Slam event in 2013. Andy Murray has brought significant reputational benefits to Merton as a place to visit and a good place to live, work and play. As well as enhancing Merton's

reputation, he has also made a major contribution to the development of British Tennis and has raised its profile.

This honour is bestowed on Virginia Wade in recognition of her being a British Winner of the Ladies Singles Tennis Championships at the Wimbledon Grand Slam event in 1977. Virginia Wade, has brought significant reputational benefits to Merton as a place to visit and a good place to live, work and play. As well as enhancing Merton's reputation, she has also made a major contribution to the development and profile of British Tennis and raised the profile of both Tennis and Women in Sport.

This honour is bestowed on Ann Haydon-Jones in recognition of her being a British Winner of the Ladies Singles Tennis Championships at the Wimbledon Grand Slam event in 1969. Ann Haydon-Jones, has brought significant reputational benefits to Merton as a place to visit and a good place to live, work and play. As well as enhancing Merton's reputation, she has also made a major contribution to the development and profile of British Tennis and raised the profile of both Tennis and Women in Sport.

This honour is bestowed on Angela Mortimer in recognition of her being a British Winner of the Ladies Singles Tennis Championships at the Wimbledon Grand Slam event in 1961. Angela Mortimer, has brought significant reputational benefits to Merton as a place to visit and a good place to live, work and play. As well as enhancing Merton's reputation, she has also made a major contribution to the development and profile of British Tennis and raised the profile of both Tennis and Women in Sport.