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COUNCIL
23 NOVEMBER 2016
(7.15 pm - 7.40 pm)

PRESENT The Mayor of Merton, Councillor Brenda Fraser
 The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Stan Anderson

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Sargeant, Marsie Skeete and Jill West.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 HONORARY ALDERMAN (Agenda Item 3)

The Leader, Councillor Stephen Alambritis moved the motion which was seconded by Councillor Oonagh Moulton

Councillor Stephen Alambritis

It is with great joy that I move this motion to confer the title of Honorary Alderman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of Maxi Martin's loyal and distinguished service to this Council over many years.

The date month and year was 7 May 1998 when the immaculately dressed fashionista Maxi Martin was first elected in St Helier Ward. She soon established herself as a new labour loyalist and ever present campaigner and a friend to all.

Not the back benches for long for our Maxi as she made it into the Cabinet within 2 years of being elected. In 2000 she was given the portfolio she loved most: Primary education and Children's services

Fizzing with energy, Maxi was re-elected in May 2002 again for St Helier Her caring approach was recognised when she was made Cabinet member for Care Services that same year.

Maxi certainly knew how to be presentable on important occasions and none more so than when she became the first citizen of the borough for the Municipal year 2003/2004. Maxi was a proud Mayor of Merton coming from Northumberland. Naturally children and young people were the focus of her mayoral year. To this day Maxi remains the only Mayor of this borough to put on a fashion show, and yes, with a catwalk included!! The show was the talk of the town and the local papers were brimming with pictures synonymous with Paris or Milan; clear evidence once more that Maxi had made her mark on the borough. She was helped during that amazing year as Mayor by her son Paul who is here today and by her colleague Cllr Judy Saunders as her Deputy.

And so we come to a hat trick of election wins when Maxi was returned again in 4 May 2006 in St Helier and Maxi is again in the Cabinet for Children's Services a post she held till her sad passing.

Maxi loved every one of the Boroughs 45,000 children. Maxi was regularly visiting local schools talking to headteachers, teachers, support staff, governors and the children. Children would recognise her from a distance and run up to her just to say hello to a very stylish lady.

She was always a dazzling figure at meetings and events. She regularly chaired with charm the Morden Area Forum.

To Maxi Domestic Violence was totally and utterly unacceptable and she made it her cause to highlight how unacceptable it was.

Another cause Maxi adopted was one that recognised the service to this country that comes from our Armed Forces. She called every soldier a hero! Armed Forces Day in Merton was corralled, mustered, cajoled into place each year by Maxi's immense organisational skills.

As Mayor Maxi opened the grand Baitul Futuh Mosque in Morden. But Maxi religiously returned to that mosque for each of their wonderful events and was a true friend of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association.

In May 2014 Maxi made it 4 election wins in a row and again for St Helier Ward and as she would always remind us "the best ward in the world!"

As a councillor myself I was absolutely bound over by how Maxi cared for her residents in St Helier ward which she served uninterrupted for over 17 years. Every

call, letter, email, complaint, compliment, request, question, query was trapped, answered and followed through.

In truth Maxi made a rare and notable contribution to Merton.

And so it is with immense pride that I call on this Council to agree to confer upon Maxi Martin the title of Honorary Alderman.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton

I know all Conservative Councillors and indeed councillors across the Chamber wish to join me in supporting this posthumous honour for our late Councillor colleague and Past Mayor Maxi Martin.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to pay such a fitting tribute to a Councillor who had such a great sense of civic pride and duty in the work she did and played such a large part on the Council.

Here in our borough Maxi is remembered with affection not just by councillors but by the many community groups - many with whom she worked so tirelessly. School children, students, teachers, cadets, scouts and guides, residents of her ward of St Helier & Haig Homes along with members of the Royal British Legion, the Baitul Futuh Mosque and the many charities across our borough have all been supported or involved with her.

Her energy and commitment was such an example to us all. As Cabinet Member for Childrens' Services, Maxi held one of the toughest portfolios albeit one she loved from 2010 until she died.

It was a privilege to work with her often as her adversary and to hold her and her work on the Children's portfolio to account and for many years we were both on the Corporate Parenting Panel.

I also admired her for her work on the difficult issue of domestic violence an issue which unfortunately transcends all parties, all areas of our borough and country and affects many families across our society. She campaigned tirelessly and we must all continue the work in that area that Maxi championed so effectively.

Everyone has their own memory of the Maxi – from her immaculate make-up and presentation with her red high heels to that big smile and the piercing eyes! To this day however 'difficult' she might have been, I can't help but miss her...

Maxi had many friends that breeched the political divide as her work for the LMA - the London Mayors' Association can attest.

One of her many Conservative friends was Brian Coleman. One of our former colleagues Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has summed this up 'True friendships transcend the political divide and we remember the unique Maxi Martin as a genuine friend to many'

I think we can all agree that ‘She will be forever in our hearts’ as she was in Merton’s.

She was indeed a loyal and distinguished servant of Merton Council over many years and I am delighted to second this motion conferring the title of Honorary Alderman upon her.

Councillors Dennis Pearce, Edith Macauley, Mary Curtin, Agatha Akyigyina, Peter Southgate and Imran Uddin addressed the meeting to express their support for the motion.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the motion which, under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Alderman to be bestowed.

The vote was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED:

That Maxi Martin is conferred with the title of Honorary Alderman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of her loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many years.

The Mayor presented Mr Paul Martin with a certificate affixed with the common seal of the Council conferring upon Maxi Martin the title of Honorary Alderman.