

Every Mayor brings his or her own passions and priorities to the role when elected to office, and one of the privileges of being the first citizen of the borough is the opportunity to do something about them. And so we can see reflected in Cllr Fraser's many activities during her Mayoral year, her professional interests in health and in justice, both in the police and as a magistrate. That experience on the bench has stood her in good stead when addressing a wide range of different audiences, not least this council chamber. She has commanded our attention every time.

Each Mayor's year is different, reflecting their involvement in the unique events that shape our borough and our city each year. I was privileged to be invited to join the Mayor for the service of hope and reconciliation at Westminster Abbey which followed the attack on Westminster Bridge and the tragic deaths of PC Keith Palmer and innocent bystanders. The service was a moving demonstration of unity in defiance of a senseless act of terrorism, with our Mayor to represent Merton with all 32 London boroughs and the City.

In a more celebratory mood, the crowds turned out for the triumphal open top bus parade when AFC Wimbledon won promotion to League One at the end of last season, and prominent among the guests of honour were our Mayor and consort on the top deck.

But it's not always the big, set piece events that evoke the sharpest recollections. At the launch of Dementia Friendly Merton in February, Mayor Brenda managed to upstage the guest of honour, the still very glamorous Angela Rippon, by arriving spectacularly late in the middle of la Rippon's speech – I'm sure it was unintentional. She then went on to deliver a very credible speech of her own.

She proved she didn't mind getting down and dirty when she donned a hi-viz tabard and litter picker to join the Morden town centre clean up in March, and encouraged a host of youngsters from the Ahmadiyya youth and a goodly number of not so young councillors to join her.

And who can forget Mayor Brenda mounting a scooter still in her elegant high heels for the launch of Poplar Primary school's scooter park, surrounded by hordes of excited children? Admittedly I don't remember her scooting as opposed to posing for photographs, but she helped to make it a memorable day for the children at Poplar and boosted the appeal to raise £20,000 to complete the scooter park.

In fact it's been a memorable year throughout, for both the large and the not so large events. On behalf of the Merton Park Independents, I'd like to thank her and her consort Lloyd for all the effort and hard work they've put into the Mayoralty this year.

**Cllr Peter Southgate**

