

Appendix C

Cllr Stephen Alambritis, Leader of the Council, London Borough of Merton, Moves the Citation and Vote of Thanks at the Annual Council Meeting of Wednesday 15 May 2019 in Honour of Councillor Mary Curtin, Mayor of Merton 2018-2019

Welcome Madam Mayor and thank you for giving me this opportunity to move the vote of thanks for the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Mary Curtin. At the time of her election as Mayor last year, Councillor Mary Curtin had completed just four years as a councillor in Lower Morden ward

From her time as Mayor this past year you would have thought she had been a councillor for many, many years given the way she has conducted herself as our first citizen of this our great borough of Merton

The news of her election did not go unnoticed back in her native Ireland and was covered by the local Nenagh Guardian, the equivalent of our Wimbledon Guardian but with a few more pages and lo and behold stories relevant to the area!

Her election to Mayor was also featured by the mighty Tipperary Star, read throughout Ireland. Now that elicited not just distant relatives but also old school mates getting in touch to find out what on earth was going on!

And so it soon became the gossip of the village about how a Tipperary lass was now Mayor of a London Borough

How did Mary react...as she always does Madam Mayor...she got on with the job

Before beginning life in active politics, Councillor Curtin was a nurse in the NHS and then went on to set up and administer Friends in St Helier, or FISH as we all fondly call it.

Councillor Mary Curtin was of course born in Nenagh, County Tipperary where they would not let their lasses leave home till the age of 18 I understand

Until that age she was as always up front with her values in respect for others, hardworking and loved her family life

Mary was certainly up front as a centre forward for her County when playing Irish Hurling or Camogie as it is called

And she scored many goals worth a valuable 3 points when placing the ball under the bar

I do not know if they used the off side rule but Mary would use all means legal or otherwise to score goals for her beloved county

But her main goal was to travel and so, aged just 18 a determined Mary came to England in 1960 in response to the government's call for nurses to work in the expanding NHS

She would go on to spend many years in the NHS, working in both general and mental health nursing

And which hospital did she work in and in which accommodation did she stay in may you ask back then in the swinging 60s?

Why, St. Helier Hospital of course and she stayed in the then nurses accommodation in Ferguson House of course!

It is no surprise therefore that Councillor Curtin made FISH an official charity of her year of office

She also selected the Colour House Children's Theatre, in Merton Abbey Mills, which has been bringing the wonder of live theatre to children for more than 20 years

Councillor Curtin has raised not £50,000 not £60,000 Madam Mayor but more than £70,000 for the two charities during her year as Mayor

Her Irish roots, and a love of the music and dance of the country, were reflected in many mayoral events.

An evening to mark St Patrick's Day was held in Wimbledon's Irish Centre and the annual Mayor's Ball had an Irish theme.

The ball, at the All England Tennis Club, was well sold out and featured a fresh Gaelic menu of lamb, colcannon and spring greens

Young dancers from world-medal-holding Irish dance academy, Ní Cholmáin wowed the audience with their skilled display

Many of Councillor Mary Curtin's 350 engagements were aimed at families

She presided over the Easter egg hunt to be organised by a Mayor, the first ever, in the borough. This was held in Morden Park over the Easter weekend and attracted more than 1,700 people

Councillor Curtin opened the new family-friendly leisure centre in Morden and was delighted to launch Merton's first sensory library

Councillor Curtin attended the annual Remembrance Day service, one hundred years after the hostilities of World War I ceased

She also marked this important centenary at a special service at Mitcham War Memorial, where she commemorated the war hero William Allison White, a recipient of the Victoria Cross

For Councillor Curtin, the year brought many other highlights – from a seat in the Royal Box at the Wimbledon Championships to being inspired by Merton’s homeless drop-in at the Salvation Army Hall

Another legacy of her time as Mayor will be a new friendship group for people recently bereaved, which will meet in Mitcham and be a valuable resource in the east of the borough Madam Mayor

The Mayor has been supported in her work by Deputy Mayor, Councillor Geraldine Stanford and her consorts; her son William and friends Marie Bateman and Dolores Bisnouth

According to Councillor Mary Curtin, being elected Mayor was a privilege and an honour. She has approached her many engagements with dignity, compassion and a sense of fun, during a year of office dedicated to bringing people together.

Putting aside her chain of office, Councillor Curtin hopes to return to help in the kitchens at Merton’s homeless drop-in at the Salvation Army Hall and continue to officiate at Merton’s Citizenship Ceremonies whenever she can

But now Madam Mayor enough from me, Because

We now need to resolve unanimously:

that the council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Mary Curtin, for the dedicated manner in which she has served as Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for the year 2018-2019.

I beg so to Move Madam Mayor, thank you.

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