

**Speech for Cllr Janice Howard.**

Thank you Madam Mayor,

I always knew that Cllr Janice Howard would be an extraordinary Mayor, however, I never thought that she would break the record for the longest serving Mayor of the London Borough of Merton!

It is of course no secret that Cllr Howard was keen for the opportunity to be the London Borough of Merton's first citizen. She accepted the honour with energy and enthusiasm and did not disappoint the Borough's residents.

Since May 2019 Janice has done incredibly well to raise approaching one hundred thousand pounds for her chosen Mayoral Charities - MacMillan Cancer Support and Faith in Action Merton Homeless Project.

An amount of much-needed funding made all the more amazing considering that Cllr Howard was unable to hold her Mayoral Ball. It is a truly fantastic achievement.

It goes without saying that it was a great disappointment to have not been able to hold the Mayoral Ball – the centrepiece of any mayoral calendar – but of course Cllr Howard in her typically stoic fashion understood the need to protect against the spread of this dreadful virus and our residents must come first.

The dedication that Cllr Howard brought to the Mayoralty deserved a finish full of glamour and pageantry. I think we can say with confidence that it would have been quite the event.

That's said, Cllr Howard held a number of excellent fundraising events and dinners in including:

The Quiz night, Lebanese night, the Christmas Ball and many more.

Cllr Howard injected new ideas for fund raising events.

Like getting me along with Cllrs Alambritis & Southgate and Chief Executive Ged Curran to grow a moustache for Movember. As you can see they all kept theirs – not me.

And on a personal note, I was delighted that the then Madam Mayor conducted my Citizenship Ceremony at Morden Park House in February. It was very special to receive my certificate of nationalisation by not just the Mayor of Merton but also a friend.

Madam Mayor, Cllr Howard attended many civic events engaging with our diverse communities, and representing our Borough with pride on key ceremonial occasions

It is of course a great pleasure to be offering this thanks to my Conservative colleague Cllr Janice Howard on her successful Mayoralty.

Cllr Howard you can be extremely proud of your 17-months as the Mayor of Merton.

I know we certainly are.