

Thank you Madam Mayor, and let me add a brief tribute from the Merton Park Independents for the service of our retiring Deputy Lieutenant Clare Whelan.

Before she came to us as the representative Deputy Lieutenant for our borough, Clare already had a long and distinguished career in Local and national Government behind her. She was a councillor in our neighbouring borough of Lambeth for 24 years. She held a number of different posts there including Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Chair; and she served as Mayor for the millennium year. She continues now to work in an advisory role on health and social care, drawing on her experience of 25 years in parliament.

She has been very supportive in her role as Deputy Lieutenant here in Merton and she has been a constant presence at events such as Remembrance Sunday, Armed Forces Day and Holocaust Memorial Day. Her work with uniformed cadets group included the opening of the new HQ for 134th detachment, the South West London Armed cadet Forces in Dorset Road. Very much a top brass occasion, as a mere ward councillor I had to blag my way in on the coat tails of the Mayor.

So thank you Clare, for all you have done for Merton in your time here as our Deputy Lieutenant.

Councillor Peter Southgate

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