

Councillor Brunt Election of Mayor 2021/22 Speech

I think with that announcement of Edith's grandson as her consort we have a combined age in our consorts of 110, so I think that shows you the age range that we represent and the inclusivity of Merton as a Borough; but I would like to thank all Councillors for putting their trust in me and for the kind words that have been said tonight and before tonight in my election as Mayor of Merton for 2021/22. I would also like to thank friends and family, from not only the UK but also around the world. And I know that there are people watching this live stream tonight from here but also from South Africa, Argentina, from India and from America, so I do hope that they've got a good sound quality and they can hear what is going on.

It is a great honour to be elected to be the Mayor of the Borough that I was born in and I grew up in, although it wasn't called Merton when I was first born. I've so much to thank Merton for and I hope that over the coming year I can demonstrate that gratitude and also give something back to Merton further.

Last year has been one of challenges for us all and I know you Madam Mayor have particularly striven to make an impact and to see as many people as possible during these difficult times. I hope as we emerge from this lockdown and more and more of our community get vaccinated we'll be able to meet more and more and be able to celebrate the hard work of so many in our community.

In particular, I'd like to celebrate the work of carers in Merton and I think that will be the theme for my year – caring. There are so many people who are carers, whether they're even school children who are also carers within the family and I think we need to celebrate so much that they've given over the last year. That's informed my choice of charities for the year, because I have chosen Marie Curie as one of my charities and the other one is Merton Christian Care Association. Both have given amazing support to families and individuals through this time and before. Marie Curie provides a range of support which includes end of life support for those who wish to spend their final days at home. And as a family we benefitted from that in my dad's dying days where they came to support us. Christian Care Association works mainly with people in Merton who have no recourse to public funds, so they are almost destitute some but they provide emotional support which is important, but also furniture, household items, food parcels when they are needed and they're helping people to get established and move on in life.

There will be time to meet and share more about those charities as time goes on, I hope we have a successful year raising funds for them, but I hope by raising awareness we'll also encourage people to volunteer for them. There will also be a better opportunity Madam Mayor to thank you for everything you've done in this last eight months since you became Mayor. It was a shortened year I know, and that's something that's sad for you but you have achieved so much. Your visits to people on

their door steps to give thank yous and recognise their contribution to their community, your visits to as many schools despite the difficulties of the pandemic. There will be a better opportunity on the 19th and beyond, 19th of May and beyond to say thank you to you. I have got a hard act to follow and it was said earlier, thank you very much and thank you to the Council and to all members who have supported me.