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COUNCIL

21 APRIL 2021

(7.15 pm - 8.17 pm)

PRESENT

The Mayor Councillor Sally Kenny
The Deputy Mayor Councillor John Dehaney,
Councillors Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Stephen Alambritis,
Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Eloise Bailey,
Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Michael Brunt,
Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie,
David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper,
Stephen Crowe, Mary Curtin, David Dean, Nick Draper,
Anthony Fairclough, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser,
Jenifer Gould, Edward Gretton, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden,
James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Natasha Irons,
Linda Kirby, Paul Kohler, Rebecca Lanning, Najeeb Latif,
Edith Macauley, Russell Makin, Peter McCabe, Simon McGrath,
Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Aidan Mundy, Hayley Ormrod,
Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, Carl Quilliam, David Simpson,
Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Geraldine Stanford,
Eleanor Stringer, Dave Ward, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson
and David Williams

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2021/22 AND THE MAYOR'S APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2021/22 (BOTH WITH EFFECT FROM 19 MAY 2021) (Agenda Item 3)

It was moved by Councillor Allison and seconded by Councillor Pritchard that Councillor Michael Brunt be elected Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for 2021/22 with effect from 19 May 2021.

Councillor McLean also spoke in support of the nomination (copies of their speeches are attached at the end of these minutes).

There not being any other nominations, the Mayor put it to the meeting and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**

Councillor Brunt announced that his Deputy Mayor for 2021/22 would be Councillor Edith Macauley.

Councillor Brunt announced that his consort would be Joan Brunt and the mayor's chaplains would be a joint chaplaincy between the Reverend Alison Judge and Reverend Belemo Alagoa.

Councillor Macauley announced her consort would be Carvel Patrick Okesola.

Councillor Brunt thanked the Council for his election for the forthcoming year and announced that his two charities would be Marie Curie and Merton Christian Care Association.

To ensure compliance with Covid19 regulations, the declaration of office and presentation of badges and chaplains' crosses would be presented on another date outside of the meeting.

4 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING MAYOR (Agenda Item 4)

The Chief Executive invited Councillor Allison to move the vote of thanks which was seconded by the Leader of the Conservative Group Councillor McLean.

In doing so, both group leaders, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Leader of the Merton Park Ward Independent Residents Group and Councillors Janice Howard and Macauley all spoke in recognition of Councillor Kenny's mayoral term. The speeches are attached at the end of these minutes.

Councillor Kenny then responded to the vote of thanks.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Sally Kenny for the dedicated manner in which she served as Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for the 2020/21 municipal year.

5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2021 are agreed as an accurate record.

6 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION AND ITS PANELS AND THE COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT (Agenda Item 6)

The report was moved by Councillor Christie and seconded by Councillor Whelton.

Councillors Williams, Kohler and Southgate also spoke on the item.

The report was put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 50, votes against: 6, abstentions: 2.

RESOLVED:

A. That Council noted the differing views of the political groups regarding the appointment of chairs and vice chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and its Panels set out in the report

B. That Council amended paragraph 9 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules by deleting the following wording: "The appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs will comply with the rules of proportionality and" as shown below:

" The Council will appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and any of its scrutiny panels at its Annual Council meeting. In each case the Chair and Vice Chair for each body will not be from the same political party. In the event of a vacancy during the council year, the Council will appoint a new Chair at the first meeting following the resignation of the Chair. All panel chairs are to be members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission."

7 CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES (Agenda Item 7)

The report was moved by Councillor Allison and seconded by Councillor Pritchard.

Councillor Barlow also spoke on the item.

The report was put to a vote and was carried – votes in favour: 51, votes against: 6, abstentions: 2.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

That the Council:

A. i) approved the constitution of committees, sub-committees and scrutiny bodies set out in Appendix A and;

ii) agreed the allocation of seats, chair and vice-chair positions and the appointment of members to those seats;

B. i) approved the constitution of consultative forums and other bodies set out in Appendix B and

ii) agreed the appointment of members to those seats;

C. agreed the allocation of seats and appointment to the outside organisations as detailed in Appendix C.

D. noted the appointments to the Cabinet including their respective portfolios (Appendix D)

E. agreed that the Council's Constitution be amended to incorporate any changes resulting from the approval of recommendations A to D.

8 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS (Agenda Item 8)

The report was moved by Councillor Byers and seconded by Councillor Allison.

Councillor McLean also spoke on the item.

The report was put to a vote and agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. That in the event that it is not legally possible to hold virtual meetings provisions beyond 7 May 2021, the revised Calendar of meetings for the 2021/22 municipal year, with the addition of an extraordinary Standards and General Purposes Committee on 28 June 2021, attached at Appendix A, is agreed.
2. That in the event that it is legally possible to hold virtual meetings beyond 7 May 2021, the Calendar of meetings for the 2021/22 municipal year, previously agreed by the Council with the addition of a Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 24 May and an extraordinary Standards and General Purposes Committee on 28 June 2021, attached at Appendix B, be agreed.

9 CHIEF OFFICER RECRUITMENT (Agenda Item 9)

The report was moved by Councillor Stringer and seconded by Councillor Allison.

The report was put to a vote and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

A Noted that the successful executive search agent for the Assistant Director, Education & Early Help has advised that the salary range of £96,840 to £101,193 per annum is on the low side in order to attract good quality candidates to the role.

B Approved a market supplement of up to £15,000 per annum if needed to secure an exceptional candidate during the recruitment process for the Assistant Director, Education & Early Help.

C Noted and approved the recruitment salary package of £96,840 to £101,193 per annum for the post of Assistant Director, Social Care as required by the Council's pay policy statement.

D Noted and approved the potential requirement for a market supplement of up to £15,000 per annum if needed to secure an exceptional candidate during the recruitment process for the Assistant Director, Social Care & Youth Inclusion.

Nomination of Cllr Brunt – Cllr Allison Speech

Madam Mayor, I propose as the next Mayor of Merton, Cllr Mike Brunt

Mike needs no introductions to most at Merton – he has been a Figge’s Marsh councillor for two stints since 1990

Mike has a very hard act to follow, but he is very distinguished. A councillor of high standing with colleagues across 20 years of public service A former Leader of LBM.

More recently Cabinet Member for Environment, and for the past few months a record-breaker: Merton’s first ever interim maternity leave Cabinet Member, a role he relinquished earlier this week, and for which he deserves our inordinate thanks.

Mike has served the council and our community tremendously, and I can think of nobody better to serve as Mayor for the next civic year.

With the agreement of Council, Mike will take up his position on May 19th when a formal, socially-distanced ceremony will take place, and I very much look forward to his installation.

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Thank you Madam Mayor and I would like to second Cllr Brunts appointment.

For members who were elected in 2018 or later - Cllr Brunt will of course be our first male mayor.

So Mr Mayor elect congratulations.

Your appointment as Mayor for the forthcoming municipal term is a deserved acknowledgment of your many years of service to Merton Council and the Borough.

Service that includes being Leader of the Council from 1997 to 1999

I am sure all members would like to join me in wishing you the very best wishes for your Mayoralty

Thank you.

Councillor McLean

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Councillor Pritchard – Election of Mayor 2021/22 Speech

Thank you very much, Madam Mayor I will take the opportunity to speak briefly, first to thank you for Your service at this very, well indeed the most difficult of times and thank you for the opportunity to again second the nomination of Councillor Brunt.

The first time I met Councillor Brunt was a few years back at his selection contest to be my local Councillor, it was a contest he won hands down, as his character and experience shone through. From that point he's gone on to become my Councillor, then my colleague and then my friend.

As time has passed I've grown to like him, respect him and value his advice and judgement. In many ways he embodies many of "Nolan's principles of public life", selflessness integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and honesty. This is something that's lacking in far too many politicians today.

Madam Mayor Councillor Brunt is already a community leader and I am delighted he will be our next Mayor. Thank you

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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.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the council places on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Councillor Sally Kenny, for the dedicated manner in which she has served as Mayor of the London Borough of Merton for the period 2020-2021.

Sally Kenny has served as a councillor for Lower Morden Ward for the past seven years. Previously a Merton school teacher she quickly established herself as a brilliant ward councillor, committed to her ward, who would often pick up casework while walking her dog.

It was no surprise that Sally was such an effective councillor, and most recently she became Chair: CYP Overview & Scrutiny Panel, a position of considerable influence.

Sally became Mayor in the unusual circumstances of Covid-19 in Sept 2020.

She has had a uniquely challenging Mayoral term during the pandemic – but has done a fantastic job of adapting the Mayoral role to support our communities.

Her term has also been a huge challenge – elected in Sept, she has held the shortest Mayoral year in Merton, yet has still gone on to raise tens of thousands for her chosen charities and recognised hundreds of residents for their work during the pandemic.

Her Mayoral charities are Morden Little League and Merton & Morden Guild of Social Service, both charities close to her heart locally.

Her current total amount raised for charity – and it's current, as she still has a few events left to run – is more than £21,000.

She was also among the first to recognise that the Mayor's role needed to move online during the pandemic, and has attended more than 80 community and formal events, many virtually, during her term on behalf of the council.

Sally's charity events have included:

- Sponsored Litter Picks (in three main town centres - Morden, Wimbledon and Mitcham)
- Movember fundraising campaign
- Mayor's sweepstakes
- Online auctions
- A Christmas Song (produced by students from the Cricket Green School)
- A Virtual Balloon Race

Most of all... Sally has championed her Covid-19 Community Awards.

Set up by the Mayor last year, the Covid-19 Community Awards were a fantastic way of using the Mayoral role to recognise and encourage community spirit.

They have also been a huge success.

Designed to recognise those who have supported their neighbours, helped their community or shown a community-minded approach during the pandemic, she received hundreds of nominations from the public.

The award is a formal certificate of recognition from the Council – a little thing that goes a long way in building community spirit, as we've seen.

More than 400 local residents have received community award certificates – many in socially-distanced visits from the Mayor herself when it was allowed.

The initiative was so popular it was later widened to include organisations such as schools, doctors' surgeries and community groups.

In total, more than 600 Covid-19 Award certificates have been awarded by Sally in the short space of her term.

As Mayor, Sally has been ably supported in her work by Deputy Mayor, Councillor John Dehaney and their consorts; as well as her team, Sandra Folkes and attendant Carl Brown.

Sally Kenny has had only 8 months as Mayor but she has achieved more than most Mayors do in 12. We thank her and her team for their service, and for doing their bit to support our community during this difficult period.

Thank you Madam Mayor.

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Thanks to the Mayor – Cllr McLean

I am pleased to second the thanks for Cllr Kenny.

I have the utmost respect for Cllr Kenny – indeed even more so in seeing the way that she has dealt with her term as Mayor during this dreadful pandemic.

It was of course over two years ago that I attended the FISH Easter party during Cllr Curtain's term as Mayor and I had hoped to have been able to attend again during Cllr Kenny's mayoralty.

Sadly it was not to be - I was looking forward to once again wearing the colourful pinny while pouring the tea.

Madam Mayor you have dealt with the difficulties of the pandemic wonderfully well and we congratulate you.

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Thank you Chief Executive

I would just like to say a short few words giving thanks from the Liberal Democrat group, to Councillor Kenny for her time as Mayor, and also to councillor Dehaney, and their consorts and the team – for the work they have all done this year.

As it's already been remarked, it's been a difficult year to be Mayor. But Cllr Kenny has been cheery and driven, and shown a determination to make the most of her time for her charities - Merton and Morden Guild and Morden Little League. I particularly want to touch on all the Little Leagues in the borough: organised sport is such a vital resource for the children, helping towards good health and development. I want to thank them for all the work they do.

I've enjoyed seeing all the photos on the Mayor's social media of her delivering her Certificates of Recognition to people and groups who have given their time during the Covid crisis. I'm particularly grateful for the efforts that she went to, to make sure that those people I'd nominated could be included as well, so thank you for that Sally.

Recognition of public service is so important.

Thank you again, Madame Mayor

Councillor Fairclough

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TRIBUTE TO THE MAYOR

Let's face it, Cllr Kenny – Sally – was dealt a rotten hand for her year as Mayor of Merton. Elected at a much-delayed Annual Council Meeting in September last year, it seemed no time at all before the excesses of Eat Out to Help Out were coming back to push up the infection rate and we were back into lockdown by November. Fortunately, we were able to go ahead with planned events for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day on a socially distanced basis. These are always solemn events in which the Mayor plays a key role as our first citizen, and one which Sally performed with dignity and composure.

But the Mayor's carol service planned for 16th December had to be cancelled at short notice, and there was no Christmas dinner or other seasonal festivities for us to enjoy with the Mayor.

Never mind. Andy Butcher, Chair of Merton and Morden Guild, and supporter of Morden Little League, came to the rescue with the Mayor's virtual Bingo session in January. This was great fun, even if his customary caller's patter had to be toned down a bit in the interests of political correctness.

Bingo seemed to bring out the gambling spirit in members, so in February we had the Mayor's horse racing sweepstake every Saturday, with a lively commentary on WhatsApp on the favoured runners and riders. The Southgate household provided surprisingly successful in the sweepstakes, so much so that we were emboldened to enter for the balloon race, but as this was entirely virtual, we never worked out how the

winners were determined. Never mind, it was fun, and Sally's two charities, Merton & Morden Guild and Morden Little League both benefitted.

And so Sally's Mayoral year comes to a close after just eight short months, thanks to the need to bring the ACM forward to avoid a possible ban on councils meeting virtually after 6th May. It's been too short. Let's thank Sally for her time as our Mayor, and the dignity and authority with which she has carried out her role. And here's hoping we can find an opportunity in the future for her to come back and be our Mayor again, only next time without the restrictions imposed by the pandemic getting in the way.

Cllr Peter Southgate

Councillor Janice Howard Vote of thanks Speech

Thank you Madam Mayor, I would like to acknowledge what an enormous challenge the past mayoral year has been for you. The pandemic has severely curtailed many of the usual community and London-wide mayoral events due to lockdown during your shortened year, however you have been an inspiration to us all, your innovative certificate program, recognising those who have gone above and beyond in the pandemic was inspired, not only that but to extend this to schools and GP surgeries certainly made its mark on every recipient, making them feel valued for the essential work they do. With face2face events impossible this did not deter Madam Mayor from finding so many ingenious ways of raising funds for her chosen charities. A virtual balloon race at Easter, online charity bingo, and online auctions have all helped to raise a great deal of money. It's down to your tremendous enthusiasm and energy that so much was achieved. There are still a few virtual events to happen and of course I shall be supporting them and hoping you raise even more money for the Morden Little league and the Merton and Morden Guild.

I am sure your mayoral year will be so well remembered for all you've done for the community of Merton. Thank you.

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Councillor Macauley Vote of thanks Speech

Thank you Chief Executive, Deputy Lieutenant Chris Cotton, Councillors and Madam Mayor, officers and distinguished guests. It gives me great pleasure tonight to give a vote of thanks to the retiring mayor of Merton, Cllr Sally Kenny for all her excellent work which she has done especially during this difficult period of Covid-19 for her two charities Merton and Morden Guild and Morden Little league.

The job of the first citizen of the borough is a very personal one in that the responsibilities are not abstract or theological but rather direct, specific and intimate. Unfortunately, during the period of her mayoralty it has been very difficult for Cllr Kenny to perform any outdoor activities due to Covid restrictions. However during this short period of time she has done quite a lot of activities with her team; virtual bingo, sponsored litter, sponsored swim, charity calendar, virtual raffle auction, Christmas song produced by the students of Cricket Green School and supported by the wonder Cllr Linda Kirby and also a virtual Balloon race. In the last two weeks Cllr Kenny has presented well over 400 certificates to Merton residents who have demonstrated a caring and nurturing approach to their neighbours, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

She has also presented well over 600 certificates to Schools, Dr Surgeries and a variety of groups who are helping others throughout the year. Cllr Kenny also attended the London Mayors Association Annual Service in Westminster Abbey with her consort and everyone was socially distanced, which was well attended by other London Borough Mayors. Due to the death of the Duke of Edinburgh, Cllr Kenny paid a tribute to Her Majesty the Queen and opened a book of condolences for the Borough of Merton. She has also had the opportunity to participate in last week's event of an evening song commemoration service for the Duke of Edinburgh, hosted by the Dean of Southwark at Southwark Cathedral. Cllr Kenny has been a very hardworking and outstanding Mayor. Together with her consort her daughter Amanda, also the Deputy Mayor Cllr John Dehaney and his consort have been a great support to her.

Also the Mayor's Chaplain the Reverend David Ruddick, Vicar of Emmanuel who is part of the Morden Church of England team and also Carl and Sandra. On behalf of the Chair of the London Mayors Association, Steve Summers and also members of the Executive, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Cllr Sally Kenny for her efforts and commitments and the way in which she has performed her duties as first citizen of the Borough. Welcome to the Chain gang. Thank you.

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My term as Mayor of Merton has certainly been different. None of us could have predicted what impact the pandemic was going to have and while it's fair enough to say that it has affected my whole term as Mayor in very many ways, I have been determined to ensure that I do my best for Merton and for my charities.

I am so grateful to my fellow Councillors for nominating me and for their support during this last year.

I wish that I could have met more of Merton's residents in person. I wish that I could have met more of Merton's charities and organisations, who do outstanding work to support our community. I would have loved to have done this. I wish that I could have raised more funding for my charities who have worked throughout Covid to support people and be a lifeline to them; always a point of contact and a break from their isolation but despite this I am so proud of what we all achieved during this difficult time.

I loved meeting those of you whom I did. Setting up the scheme to deliver certificates, in recognition of what groups and individuals have done for our community during COVID is something of which I am so proud. Merton has so very many kind, thoughtful and caring people living and working in our

borough. The people of Merton supported each other throughout this time and I saw our local community helping others. Each certificate was given as a result of nominees from Merton residents and it was rewarding to acknowledge people who went ahead and provided for us all.

As I presented certificates, socially distanced of course, I was taken aback at the surprise and delight with which they were received. Certificates were issued to schools, doctors and dentists surgeries, care homes and places of worship, which remained open, in different ways, throughout COVID.

There are still very many people who deserve certificates and recognition that I have not reached and I'm sorry that we didn't have time to get to you all. Circumstances have reduced my ability to visit more people, and now I am running out of time but if anyone does have someone they wish to nominate please do let me know. There are a number of individuals and groups I wish to thank.

My charities; The Merton and Morden Guild, Anne and Hamish and Morden Little League, Andy Butcher, who were tenacious in their support of me in Zoom fund raising events. You must all be well aware of the Zoom Bingo and Sweepstake as well as the online auctions and raffles. My committee,

comprised of, as well as my charities and Deputy Mayor; Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Janice Howard, Linda Kirby and Edith Macauley, who supported and encouraged me, mainly at a distance via Zoom. My Consort, my daughter Amanda, who was delighted to attend 2 events when conditions allowed. My thanks also to my Deputy Mayor, John Dehaney, whom was a positive support to me with his Consort, his wife Audrey.

Some people have been incredibly generous with donations, whether financially or with prizes. Very many Councillors and the wider community have generously supported the virtual events. To all of you I am extremely grateful. Without your support my position would have been more difficult and frustrating.

My sincere thanks to Sandra and Carl; their attention to protocol is exemplary. They both ensured that I knew where I was going, what to be ready for and the necessary detail I would require. Carl had to be tolerant of my back seat driving; of me telling him the quickest route to take, especially in my local area. We certainly weaved our way around Merton, delivering the certificates in person. Also to Steve, who stepped up to support me whenever needed. Sandra was forever ready to any suggestion I made and was prepared to act at quite short notice which I found invaluable. She always had a ready smile to any idea I had and

enabled me to feel that I could make suggestions and receive a balanced critical response. Sandra is a positive person and is a delight to work with in all areas. Carl, as many of you know, likes a joke and it amused him to find my keys or phone which often dropped in the car without me realizing until I needed them. There the needed item would be in Carl's safe hand. Sandra and Carl are a magnificent team. Together the three of us laughed our way through the ongoing changes in legislation to keep ourselves in a constructive frame of mind.

I wish also to thank Ged and the two Louises for their support with Council meetings.

I sincerely thank every one of you who has helped and supported me during this different year. My very best wishes to Councillor Brunt who will take over this mantel; I shall support you all I can.

Thank you.