

COUNCIL
12 JULY 2018

(7.15 pm - 8.45 pm)

PRESENT The Mayor: Councillor Mary Curtin

The Deputy Mayor: Councillor Geraldine Stanford

Councillors Agatha Mary Akyigyina OBE, Stephen Alambritis, Mark Allison, Stan Anderson, Laxmi Attawar, Eloise Bailey, Thomas Barlow, Nigel Benbow, Hina Bokhari, Kelly Braund, Mike Brunt, Adam Bush, Omar Bush, Ben Butler, Tobin Byers, Billy Christie, David Chung, Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Pauline Cowper, Stephen Crowe, David Dean, John Dehaney, Anthony Fairclough, Edward Foley, Brenda Fraser, Edward Gretton, Joan Henry, Daniel Holden, James Holmes, Andrew Howard, Janice Howard, Natasha Irons, Sally Kenny, Linda Kirby, Rebecca Lanning, Najeeb Latif, Edith Macauley MBE, Russell Makin, Simon McGrath, Nick McLean, Oonagh Moulton, Aidan Mundy, Dennis Pearce, Owen Pritchard, David Simpson CBE, Marsie Skeete, Peter Southgate, Eleanor Stringer, Martin Whelton, Dickie Wilkinson and David Williams

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Draper, Mark Kenny, Paul Kohler, Peter McCabe, Hayley Ormrod, Carl Quilliam and Dave Ward.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH (Agenda Item 3)

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition to speak on the motion.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis:

"I, Cllr Stephen Alambritis, being the duly elected leader of the council of the aforementioned borough of Merton on this the 12th day of the month of July, in this the year of our Lord of 2018

do hereby move to recommend to this council to agree to present Philip Jones, with a certificate conferring upon him the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough affixed with the common seal of the Council.

I therefore move and Cllr Oonagh Moulton the leader of the Opposition will second

That, by virtue of the power vested in it by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council does admit Philip Jones as Freeman of the London Borough of Merton

This honour is bestowed on Philip Jones in recognition of the substantial contribution he made to the Borough as a Councillor for the Ravensbury ward in over 39 cumulative years of service, since his election to the Council in 1971, including serving as Deputy Mayor in the municipal year 2007/2008; and his extensive civic service.

In particular, Philip was an active member of the local community, chairing the Morden Community Forum, as well as being a member of the Environment Committee and of the Planning Committee with 10 years as chair of the latter committee.

He also served as a School Governor for Malmesbury School in his ward and was a Trustee of the Merton and Morden Guild of Social Services championing the improvement of local health and social care facilities for the residents of Merton

And was instrumental in the building of the medical centre on Morden Road

Philip has been a lifelong resident of Morden and a dedicated former employee of the trade union then called NALGO and now known as UNISON

Madam Mayor

That is the legal stuff out of the way

Let us get personal now

Philip Mervin Jones was born in Northamptonshire after his parents were evacuated there during the Second World War

When the war ended the family moved back to Maycross Avenue in Morden

Aged 11 the young Philip with his collection of Eagle comics in his satchel attended Rutlish Boys School in Mostyn Road

After school and armed with a good degree from Sheffield University the 21 year old young man enjoyed a career as the Education Officer to NALGO

The National and Local Government Officers' Association was a major British trade union representing 'white collar' workers having been set up in 1905

By the late 1970s it was the largest union with over 700,000 members

Its vice presidents included the Earl of Derby and one Neville Chamberlain

And so it came to pass that Philip chose to join the Labour Party

Philip first put his hat in the ring as a local council candidate in 1968 but that year saw a rare Conservative landslide and so undeterred in May 1971 Philip stood in Cannon Hill and to great success

In 1978 he won a seat in Abbey Ward but it was with Ravensbury Ward that he fell in love and that affair began in May of 1986 until May of this year

Philip looked after his residents with an absolute passion

He also loved the Labour Party and loved leafletting and canvassing

He is one of many candidates up and down this country to have been bitten by a dog while on the stump

On this occasion the dog was owned by a rival Tory candidate

Being the gentleman that he is Philip did not pursue the matter with electoral services

He won that election hands down anyway minus the tip of an index finger

Philip Jones was Chair of Planning for many years (The glass building in the Broadway belonging to the CIPD, yes that was passed by Philip)

Philip Jones was also Environment Services Committee Chair and his passion for road humps to ease speeding led to the Evening Standard describing Merton as the Borough with the Hump!!

Councillor Jones was also Leader of the council and Deputy Mayor to Cllr John Dehaney

But let us now leave the past badges of office and wish Philip the best for the future as he:

Picks his berries

Washes his Jars

Washes and hulls the fruit from his garden

Crushes the fruit

Measures out the sugar

Mixes the berries with pectin

And cooks to a full boil

Yes Philip makes Jam and has been doing so for longer than Jeremy Corbyn!

So if you were to go to the Morden Funday Labour Stall on Sunday 22 July there you will see Jam today and jam tomorrow made by Philip

Philip will also enjoy many trips to the Ian Allan Book and Model Shop in Lower Marsh by the Cut near the Old Vic as he loves his British Rail Books and has quite a collection

And not just a collection of books but memories past of real journeys by train to places like Berlin, Sarajevo, Malaga, Helsinki and Athens, of course with many more train journeys to come

Madam Mayor

Philip has been on the public service journey all his life from NALGO to Merton and has given his time and best effort to members of the public here in Merton and especially to the residents of Ravensbury Ward who have been well served by him

We now wish him all the best in his by now real retirement and I so move the motion to admit Philip Jones as Freeman of the London Borough of Merton.”

Councillor Oonagh Moulton:

“Madame Mayor I am delighted and honoured to second this motion and to place on record our recognition on this side of the Chamber for the long and dedicated public service (some 39 years cumulative) that former Councillor Philip Jones has given to our Borough and to his residents of Ravensbury Ward.

Philip has given distinguished service on the many committees on which he has served but he is probably best known for his expertise and length of service on the Planning Committee which he has also chaired for some 10 years.

His extensive civic service includes a term as Deputy Mayor from 2007 to 2008.

Madam Mayor, Philip has I know been held in high esteem across this chamber and has been widely regarded as one of the ‘wise heads’ and I speak for many of us when I say that we will certainly miss his incisive contributions.

Philip we wish you well and look forward to seeing you at future Civic functions and exercising the new rights in your new role as an Honorary Freeman of the Borough.

Madam Mayor it gives me great pleasure to second this motion.”

The Mayor then invited the following Members to speak on the motion.

Councillor Peter Southgate:

“Thank you for the opportunity to add my voice to the many in support of the award of the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Merton to former Cllr Philip Jones. This is an exceptional award for a retiring councillor, but it reflects exceptional service to our borough. I’ve known Philip for fewer than half those 39 years of service, but he’s always seemed to me an implacable and reliable presence in the sometimes swirling politics of Merton, and I will miss that reassuring presence and sagacity.

Nowhere more than on the Planning Applications Committee, on which Philip has served as Chair or member throughout my time on the council. When I was first appointed to the PAC a former member advised me – if you’re not sure which way to vote, watch what Philip Jones does, he’s usually right.

And so it has proved. I have noticed that Philip tends to bide his time while louder voices argue the merits or demerits of applications that come to the PAC, but his interventions when they came were always well informed and soundly based in policy, and as such were often decisive. And he has always demonstrated an ability to think and act independently in planning, which is essential if all parties, applicant and objectors, are to have confidence in the process. His wisdom will be missed.

As will his dry or wry sense of humour. I remember when the Merton Park Independents first gained the balance of power in 2006, it was suggested to me that we might like to claim a seat in the front row of the stalls as it were, sitting alongside the big boys in the chamber. Overhearing this, Philip’s advice to me was – I’d stay where you are on the back row, then you can continue to look down on us literally as well as metaphorically.

While we were glad of that advice, I hasten to add that we never looked down on our colleagues in either major party – literally but not seriously, to misquote.

We have every confidence that Philip will exercise his deserved freedom of the borough by continuing to walk its length and breadth, as he has done for so many years in its service.”

Councillor David Williams:

“Thank you Madam Mayor. I first knew Philip when he became a Councillor in Cannon Hill, but through the column he was writing for the Morden Parish News as “our man on the Council” and I didn’t mind that a bit until I became a candidate in Cannon Hill.

Philip wrote a regular column for the Morden Parish News and when I did succeed him as a Councillor in the Cannon Hill Ward in 1974 I didn’t manage to keep up the momentum that he did in writing that column and I think that says something about Philip. That when he sets about a task, that he sticks with it, and we have a great deal to be grateful for across the chamber for the consistency in which he has undertaken his role as a Councillor.

Through the Church, I knew his mother and his late brother and Philip, as others have already said, has been deeply committed to this Borough pretty much all his life

and I thought it was actually a bit unfortunate that we didn't mention in this motion that he was Leader of this Council in 1999 to 2000 at a time of great turbulence in the Labour Group but he stepped forward and fulfilled that role and for those of us who have undertaken it know that it's more than just being in the Chamber. You have to do a great deal behind it, including managing your own group.

So all credit to Philip for all that he's achieved, in particular on Planning of course. He's also kept us, on many occasions, on the right path with his attention to detail, particularly spelling and grammar when Council documents have been a little weak. But Philip Jones is a doer, and I'm sure even as an Honorary Freeman, Philip will continue to be a doer for Merton."

The Mayor then called for a vote on the Motion and reminded the Council that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, it requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Freeman to be bestowed.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

The substantive resolution was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That, by virtue of the power vested in it by Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council does admit Philip Jones as Freeman of the London Borough of Merton.

This honour is bestowed on Philip Jones in recognition of the substantial contribution he made to the Borough as a Councillor for the Ravensbury ward in over 39 cumulative years of service, since his election to the Council in 1971, including serving as Deputy Mayor in the municipal year 2007/2008; and his extensive civic service.

In particular, Philip was an active member of the local community, chairing the Morden Community Forum, as well as being a member of the Environment Committee and of the Planning Committee, with 10 years as chair of the latter. He also served as a School Governor for Malmesbury School in his ward and was a Trustee of the Merton and Morden Guild of Social Services, championing the improvement of local health and social care facilities for the residents of Merton and was instrumental in the building of the medical centre on Morden Road. Philip has been a lifelong resident of Morden and a dedicated former employee of the trade union then called NALGO and now known as UNISON.

4 HONORARY ALDERMAN (Agenda Item 4)

1. Honorary Alderman – former Councillor John Bowcott

The Mayor asked for a proposer and a seconder for the motion to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor John Bowcott.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton:

“Madame Mayor I am delighted to move this motion conferring the title of Honorary Alderman upon our former Conservative councillor John Bowcott and which is a fitting recognition of his length of service, civic duty and distinguished commitment to our borough and to the residents of Village Ward whom he has served so loyally.

John was first elected in 2002 with the class that includes myself and David Simpson. He quickly established himself on the Planning Committee and gave distinguished service which has received widespread recognition and support across the Borough.

In addition he was the Deputy Mayor 2012-13 to Cllr David Williams and I can recall many great occasions & events with him and his wonderful Deputy Mayoress and consort Leslie.

Madame Mayor, Honorary Alderman is a fitting tribute to bestow on one of our distinguished former members and who has given so much of his time, so freely to the service of the Borough.

Madam Mayor I move this motion.”

Councillor Stephen Alambritis:

“It gives me great pleasure to second this. John Bowcott – committed, courteous, hard working, never angry, works across party lines – a real gentleman.

A pleasure to second Madam Mayor.”

Councillors Daniel Holden and David Williams also addressed the meeting speaking in support of the motion.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the Motion and reminded the Council that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, it requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Alderman to be bestowed.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That former Councillor John Bowcott is conferred with the title of Honorary Alderman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of his loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many years.

2. Honorary Alderman – former Councillor Andrew Judge

The Mayor asked for a proposer and a seconder for the motion to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Andrew Judge.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis:

“Thank you Madam Mayor for calling me for this second motion that former Councillor Andrew Judge to confer him with the title of Honorary Alderman for the London Borough of Merton in recognition of his loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many many years. A hugely successful former Leader of the Council, Andrew improved the standing of this Council immensely during his time as Leader. He had great attention to detail, passionate about football; a Manchester City fan; we’ll forgive him for that. But an AFC Wimbledon fan too and fought successfully to bring the club back to the Borough in Plough Lane. Major achievement in working with officers brought him the internationally acclaimed Merton Rule on the Environment, climate change and especially with regard to commercial buildings. The great and brilliant barrister with a cause; always polite, always giving his time to colleagues, officers and to residents, a well deserved alderman of the Borough for former Councillor Andrew Judge. Thank you Madam Mayor”.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton:

“Thank you Madam Mayor, indeed I would be delighted to second this motion. Councillor Judge has been a very long serving and very distinguished member of this chamber. Councillor Alambritis has enunciated very lucidly exactly all his achievements and I’m delighted to second this. Thank you.”

Councillor Linda Kirby also addressed the meeting speaking in support of the motion.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the Motion and reminded the Council that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, it requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Alderman to be bestowed.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That former Councillor Andrew Judge is conferred with the title of Honorary Alderman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of his loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many years.

3. Honorary Alderman – former Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender

The Mayor asked for a proposer and a seconder for the motion to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton:

“Madame Mayor it is wonderful to have the opportunity to move this motion to confer the title of Honorary Alderman upon our former Conservative councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender.

First elected in a By-Election in November 2000, Gilli has given 18 years service and 100% dedication and commitment to her community and to the residents of West Barnes Ward.

Madam Mayor Gilli has given extensive service to the whole Borough on a number of committees. She was the Chair of the Healthier Communities & Older People Overview & Scrutiny Panel from 2006 to 2011 but she is mainly known for her long service on the Health & Wellbeing Board.

Her public service was recognised in 2011 when she was elected Mayor and what a fantastic year that was.

Throughout her term however Gilli has dedicated her time, passion and energy to many of the voluntary and charitable organisations across the Borough.

Madame Mayor a particular mention has to go to the founding of the Rendez-Vous Club that Gilli and her longstanding partner and councillor, Brian set up to help combat loneliness and to promote a healthy lifestyle for older people.

I can personally recall one initiative which I think reflects that passion and drive for health and wellbeing on an individual and personal basis, when she encouraged all councillors to take part in a diet and weekly weigh-in – complete with a tape measure, step counter and before and after photos!

Less popular was her decision to ban the cookies from our meetings – though Madame Mayor I have noticed the biscuits creeping back!

Whilst I said that it was wonderful to be moving this motion on such a deserving person I cannot but help feel that is with some sadness that I do so as clearly Gilli did have a few more years' service to give and I know that many in her Ward, across the Borough and across this Chamber have been shocked by her departure.

Madame Mayor we do hope that Gilli will continue her passion for community service and we look forward to welcoming her back as Honorary Alderman."

Councillor Stephen Alambritis:

"Thank you Madam Mayor, it gives me great pleasure to second this motion on behalf of Gilli Lewis-Lavender. A hugely successful campaigner for older people, a champion of West Barnes, with infectious enthusiasm and a hugely successful Mayor in 2011/12 who raised so much money, Madam Mayor, that her chosen charity did not know how to spend it!

She crossed the political divide many times by bringing people from all sides together and her adoring husband fully deserves her back. Thank you."

Councillors Daniel Holden and David Williams also addressed the meeting speaking in support of the motion.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the Motion and reminded the Council that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, it requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Alderman to be bestowed.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That former Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender is conferred with the title of Honorary Alderman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of her loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many years.

4. Honorary Alderman – former Councillor Ian Munn

The Mayor asked for a proposer and a seconder for the motion to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Ian Munn.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis:

“Thank you Madam Mayor. It gives me great pleasure, I move the motion that former Councillor Ian Munn is conferred with the title of honorary alderman for the London Borough of Merton in recognition of his loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many years and I know that we’ve received apologies from Councillor Munn and I know that Councillor Makin will speak on his behalf and will also collect his certificate on his behalf. Councillor Ian Munn was a consummate Councillor; paid great attention to detail and Cricket Green was in his blood. 1994-2002 he was a Phipps Bridge ward councillor, from 2002 to May this year he was a Cricket Green ward councillor, I think it was roughly the same area but some boundary changes and names. Now Planning and the look of the Borough was in his heart; he was Chair of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee for many years, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Chair of Mitcham Community Forum as well as on the Borough Plan Advisory Committee, Standards and General Purposes Committee and loads and loads of other stuff. He was Mayor for 2000-2001, the millennium year. Now when anyone asked for help Ian Munn would gladly give it and when he saw anyone that needed help he would go up to them and offer it. He was a great organiser for our Mitcham Carnival that goes on to this day and I have great pleasure in moving this motion for Ian Munn, Madam Mayor.”

Councillor Oonagh Moulton:

“Thank you Madam Mayor. It does indeed give me great pleasure to second this motion and I’m sorry to hear that Ian Munn cannot be with us this evening and I hope our very best wishes can be passed on to him tonight. I know that former Councillor Saunders is kindly here to accept his award.

All I can say is that I fully support and second the motion. Thank you.”

Councillor Russell Makin and Peter Southgate also addressed the meeting speaking in support of the motion.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the Motion and reminded the Council that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, it requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Alderman to be bestowed.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That former Councillor Ian Munn is conferred with the title of Honorary Alderman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of his loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many years.

5. Honorary Alderman – former Councillor Judy Saunders

The Mayor asked for a proposer and a seconder for the motion to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Judy Saunders.

Councillor Stephen Alambritis:

“Thank you Madam Mayor it gives me great pleasure to move the fifth motion that former Councillor Judy Saunders is conferred with the title of honorary alderman for the London Borough of Merton in recognition of her loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many many years. A very very popular Councillor was Councillor Judy Saunders. We’ve just had the World Cup, sadly England failed to get through to the final but in all the football leagues there are votes by the fans about who is the player of the year, which is the goal of the year but the most prized vote is by the players about the players; the players player award is the most prized. If there was Madam Mayor, a Councillors’ Councillor award I think Judy Saunders would win it every time, such a very very popular Councillor amongst all sides of the Chamber. And she was chosen by her colleagues across all parties to mayoral positions three times Madam Mayor; twice as Deputy Mayor, once as Mayor, a record I believe in Merton. Another champion for Cricket Green; never craved attention but got on with it anyway, but she did gain attention because of her powerfully friendly approach to her work. I move the motion Madam Mayor”.

Councillor Oonagh Moulton:

“Thank you Madam Mayor, I’m delighted to second this motion. I very much believe that Councillor Saunders has given very loyal and very distinguished service across the Borough as Councillor for many years and I’m would also be happy to second Councillor Alambritis’ special award for Councillors. I think across the Borough we can certainly say that she is “woman of the match”. Thank you very much and I’m very happy to second what I know is a very popular award for former Councillor Saunders. Thank you.”

Councillors Russell Makin and Peter Southgate also addressed the meeting speaking in support of the motion.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the Motion and reminded the Council that under Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, it requires more than a two thirds majority of Members passing the motion for the Honorary Alderman to be bestowed.

The vote was carried, unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That former Councillor Judy Saunders is conferred with the title of Honorary Alderman of the London Borough of Merton in recognition of her loyal and distinguished service to the Council over many years.

5 VOTE OF THANKS TO FORMER COUNCILLORS (Agenda Item 5)

The report was moved by Councillor Stephen Alambritis and seconded by Councillor Oonagh Moulton.

Councillors Anthony Fairclough and Peter Southgate also addressed the meeting and spoke on the item.

RESOLED

That, following their retirement from membership of the Council, the Council places on record its sincere appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the Borough by the former members listed in the appendix to these minutes and extends to them its grateful thanks for their activities on behalf of the Borough.

Minute Item 5

APPENDIX A

COUNCILLOR	TERM/S OF OFFICE
Philip Jones	1971 – 1974 1978 – 1982 1986 – 1990 1990 – 1994 1994 – 1998 1998 – 2002 2002 – 2006 2006 – 2010 2010 - 2014 2014 - 2018
Ian Munn	1994 – 1998 1998 – 2002 2002 – 2006 2006 – 2010 2010 – 2014 2014 - 2018
Judy Saunders	1994 – 1998 1998 – 2002 2002 – 2006 2006 – 2010 2010 – 2014 2014 - 2018
Andrew Judge	1995 – 1998 1998 – 2002 2002 – 2006 2006 – 2010 2010 – 2014 2014 - 2018
Gilli Lewis-Lavender	2000 – 2002 2002 – 2006

	2006 – 2010 2010 – 2014 2014 - 2018
John Bowcott	2002 – 2006 2006 – 2010 2010 – 2014 2014 - 2018
Gregory Udeh	2006 – 2010 2010 - 2014 2014 - 2018
Brian Lewis-Lavender	2006 – 2010 2014 - 2018
Suzanne Grocott	2010 – 2014 2014 - 2018
Jeff Hanna	2010 – 2014 2014 – 2018
Mary Jane Jeanes	2010 – 2014 2014 - 2018
John Sargeant	2010 – 2014 2014 – 2018
Linda Taylor	2012 – 2014 2014 - 2018
Hamish Badenoch	2014 - 2018
Michael Bull	2014 – 2018
Charlotte Chirico	2014 - 2018
Fidelis Gadzama	2014 – 2018
Ross Garrod	2014 – 2018
Abigail Jones	2014 – 2018
Abdul Latif	2014 - 2018
Katy Neep	2014 – 2018
Jill West	2014 – 2018
Jerome Neil	2016 – 2018