

TRIBUTE TO RETIRING MAYOR – CLLR MARSIE SKEETE

Thank you for allowing me to add my tribute to Cllr Marsie Skeete for her successful Mayoral year that has now come to an end.

Each member who takes on the role of Mayor brings something new and unique to it – that is the advantage of living in a borough as diverse and lively as Merton. So you might expect me to mention Cllr Skeete’s Guyanese heritage, which has featured so prominently in the events – and the cuisine – of her year. But in fact she shares that with former Mayor Cllr David Chung, her fellow councillor in Longthornton and Mayor in 2015/16.

No, Marsie’s claim to uniqueness is to be the most glamorous granny ever to have graced the dais in this chamber. Most people can manage to look good in the Mayoral robes, but it is Marsie’s high fashion sense beyond the bounds of the robes that we have come to look forward to at her events and celebrations. And her fashions work so well because of the radiant presence that fills them. She has brought life and vivacity to the many events she has hosted, especially on behalf of her two chosen charities, Merton Mencap and the Commonsides Community Development Trust. Both work with vulnerable people in Merton, and both have benefitted significantly from her support. Marsie has always been prepared to go the extra mile for the causes she believe in – no mean feat on those platform soles!

And allow me to add a tribute to the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Judy Saunders, now retired. This is for largely personal reasons – I greatly enjoyed the year I spent as her Deputy when Judy was Mayor in 2005/06, and learned an enormous amount about the borough and how it works while still a relatively new councillor. She has continued to contribute to our civic life in many roles since then, and it is fitting that she should conclude her 25 year career as a councillor in Merton with a second term as Deputy Mayor. Judy, you leave for your retirement by the seaside in Kent with our warmest best wishes.

Cllr Peter Southgate

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