



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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'Miss Marple' joins 1,000 older people at Sir Simon Milton Foundation Tea Dance

On Sunday 1st December former Miss Marple and Gangsta Granny actress, Julia McKenzie CBE, joined 1,000 Westminster residents aged 65 and over for a glorious afternoon of live music and entertainment at the annual Sir Simon Milton Foundation Tea Dance.

Now in its 14th year, the charity event has become a calendar highlight for many older people in Westminster and their carers who look forward to the special festive event held in the magnificent Great Room at the Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane.

Guests enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea and music from Tea Dance regulars, the Red Stripe Band, who filled the dance floor. There was a performance from singer and guitarist Arrun Harker, and students from the Sylvia Young Theatre School delighted the audience with a spectacular Carnaby Street medley.

The Travellin' Shedders, a 25-piece male ukulele band, played a rousing set of nostalgic tunes with everyone joining in. The final performance of the afternoon was from Rashmi Becker, from Step Change Studios, an inclusive Latin and Ballroom dance company. Rashmi and her partner Lawrence James performed a dazzling quickstep, followed by a breath-taking waltz routine from Lawrence and wheelchair-user Laura Jones.

Local resident, 100-year-old Percival Chafer was presented with a Christmas hamper kindly donated by Fortnum & Mason in celebration of being the oldest guest at the event.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Ruth Bush, attended as a special guest and welcomed people on arrival. Many local charities and voluntary organisations supported the event by bringing along local residents, including Carers Network, One Westminster's Befriending Plus, Westminster care homes, Open Age and Age UK Westminster. Team Westminster Ambassadors and Volunteer Police Cadets from Westminster, Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge volunteered at the event alongside Westminster City Council staff.

The Sir Simon Milton Foundation Tea Dance is generously sponsored by Shaftesbury Plc, and supported by JW Marriott Grosvenor House London and Westminster City Council.

Lady Christabel Flight, Founding Trustee of the Sir Simon Milton Foundation and Older People's Champion at Westminster City Council, said: "We are beyond grateful to our generous sponsors, volunteers and performers for helping to make the Tea Dance possible and bringing so much joy to older Westminster residents. Loneliness is an appalling experience for anyone and we hope that the Tea Dance helps bring some much needed relief with an afternoon of fun and friendships."

Matthew Sykes, Chief Executive of the Sir Simon Milton Foundation, said: "The run up to Christmas can be a particularly isolating time for many older people. We are delighted that the Tea Dance continues to bring festive cheer and lift the spirits of local residents, many of whom do not get many opportunities to leave the house. Seeing the whole community come together, young and old, and so many smiling faces shows just how much impact it has."

Guest comments included: "One of the best events for senior residents in Westminster. It is such a wonderful event to cast away all our doubts and remind us that life is for living" and "We loved the Police Cadets dancing with us – wow!".

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The [Sir Simon Milton Foundation](#) works to continue Simon Milton's vision of a society in which communities care, the young aspire, and older people thrive. The mission of the Sir Simon Milton Foundation is to provide opportunities in education and training for the young and for older people to feel valued for their contribution to their communities.

The Sir Simon Milton Foundation is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) Registered Charity Number 1174405.