



NEWS

Colehill Community Library

Published every two months. Editor: Graham Mallett, ccl.editor1@gmail.com
Colehill Community Library Ltd., Middlehill Road, Colehill BH21 2HL
01202 886676 www.colehill.gov.uk/colehill-community-library Reg. Charity 1151552

Special Issue 17th August 2019

John Gooch steps down as Colehill Library Chairman – end of an era!

Ardent, tenacious and successful campaigner to keep Colehill Library open for the Community.

John Gooch's active involvement and support for the library goes back to the days of the early threats of closure by DLS; three of which were resisted.

Finally in 2011 Dorset Council announced that it was intending to withdraw its financial support for nine libraries including Colehill.

In December that year, more than 120 people came forward as volunteers to run a community library.



John campaigning on the steps of County Hall

Being on the Parish Council at the time of the last most serious threat, he was active in setting up CLAG (Colehill Library Action Group) formed from members of the Friends Committee and the Parish Council. They held direct discussions with DCC and EDDC. John also attended some of the meetings with AdLib, the group formed from representatives from library friends groups campaigning to save Dorset's 20 threatened libraries

In February 2012 Colehill Community Library was set up at the first Committee meeting chaired by John. The choice of, and acceptance by, John as Chairman was very important in view of the need to deal with the considerable weight of legal and financial machinations to come. He worked with David Mitchell to secure the financial support of the Parish Council. This was assured when the residents of Colehill responded to a questionnaire and agreed to pay a small extra sum on the Council Tax to be used specifically to run the library.

As John explained twelve months later, "last year we started as a committee of volunteers, decided to become a private limited company limited by guarantee, and have applied to become a charity, which we hope will happen in March".

During this time John was supported by a growing number of very able volunteers. However it is doubtful if anything could have been achieved so successfully without John's considerable drive and high level of activity. Much of this work was challenging, time consuming (and often tedious). Colehill Library finally became community managed on 8th January 2013 and celebrated the official opening on the 9th February, fittingly National Libraries Day that year.

John's energetic work has continued to this day, overseeing along the way a number of necessary, expensive projects (windows, roof, etc.) to ensure the structural integrity of the building.



John pictured at the official opening with Colehill resident and TV star Michael Medwin OBE, Annette Brooke MP, and the local Councillors who have been so supportive.

A message from **Derek Henderson**, Chairman of the Friends of Colehill Library and Management Committee member

"There is no doubt that John has earned the well deserved thanks from the whole of Colehill community for his contribution to the outstanding success now enjoyed by the library and establishing a strong foundation."

A message from **David Mitchell**, CCL Trustee and Member of the Colehill Parish Council

"...without John's tenacity throughout the (negotiation) process we would not be where we are today."

Val Seddon writes

"The news that we had lost our library was a dark day for those of us who had fought for its survival under the leadership of Derek Henderson. All seemed lost. Our little band anguished over our next move. It was at this point that John, began to take positive action. The way ahead required more skills and imagination than most of us possess. Within a comparatively short time a voluntary library support system from among the community was organised, a management company was created and a front of house team have been impressive in their dedication. There are several individuals who have cause to be proud of their achievement but John has been a driving force from the very beginning and he will be missed. You won't hear John boast; his droll sense of humour belies his apparent seriousness. As a historian maybe he will reflect on the irony of how we lost battle but won the war. John, you will be a hard act to follow."

A message from **Tracey Paine**, long time Parish Clerk and Trustee of CCL Ltd

"John was fundamental in getting the Parish Council and the Friends of Colehill Library to form the Colehill Library Action Group (CLAG), and without CLAG the library would not have survived."

I met John in 2007, he was my first Chairman of Council and he was a great help to me, especially with his accountancy knowledge. John was also the person who introduced me to the lovely Border terrier dog breed!"

Mary Redman writes

"John has been hugely helpful to me, as Treasurer. In addition to his timely authorisation of payments, he has contributed greatly to the production of annual accounts, and liaison with accountants. His expertise in this area will be tough to replace!"

Chairman-elect **Cllr. Susan Cowsill** says "John is going to be a hard act to follow!"

A message from **Tracy McGregor**, Early Help and Library Services Manager, Dorset Council

"From the early days of discussing the changes to the libraries, I have enjoyed working with John. Throughout the changes, he has represented Colehill with a passion and a belief in the value of the local library for the community. John has always been courteous and professional in these discussions although they could be challenging at times. His commitment to Colehill Community Library over the past 5 years or more is to be commended and part of its success. Knowing John he won't take the credit for this but he deserves to be proud of what he has achieved."

Colehill Community
Writing Project's
"Life on the Hill"
Book launched
12th November 2016



A message from **Cilla Sparks**, active volunteer and leader of the Library's Just Write Group

"In 2015 the Just Write group, and many other Library users, began collecting and writing memories, poems, stories and articles about life in Colehill. Initially conceived as a project simply to encourage people to meet together and write, it was thanks to John Gooch, who approached East Dorset District Council on our behalf, that we received a grant to publish the collection of creative anecdotes. The resulting book, Life on the Hill, was published in 2016. Profits from the sale of the book support the Library, and it is available for purchase or to borrow from the Library. Thank you John for your part in making this project a reality, and helping us capture a moment in the life of Colehill."

From **Petra Peters**, Community Library Liaison Officer

"John has worked hard to ensure there has been a continued, smooth collaboration between the Community Managed Library and the Council. We have enjoyed many interesting conversations about various library related topics. He will be greatly missed!"

A final word from **Linda Roberts**, Library Volunteer Coordinator

"We should all appreciate John's supportive but light touch in encouraging the daily work of the library. It has allowed the wide and varied talents of our volunteers to be used to the full and to develop our services to the community. Not every "boss" would have been so receptive to the variety of ideas which have been floated passed him! Thanks John."