

Pilton Loses a Gifted Community Leader



Friends, colleagues and former pupils were shocked last week to learn of the sudden death of Dave Butt at the age of only 63. Dave was a universally popular teacher at Braunton School until 2010, a Barnstaple Town and then North Devon District Councillor, and a leading player in all types of Pilton community activities. He also contributed enormously to the world of rugby in Devon, and was closely involved in the recent World Cup organisation. He was a huge supporter of the Barnstaple-based charity Amigos Worldwide, and worked as a volunteer for Children's Hospice South West. He was also made an Honorary Alderman of Barnstaple last year. Although he had stepped down from formal public duty in recent years, he was still very much involved in the

North Devon theatres, museum and the Pilton Green Man Festival.

Enormous tributes were paid to Dave in the press and on social media as news of his death spread. **North Devon Gazette** reporter **Tony Gussin** said: "He was a tireless worker for his community, always ready to champion a local cause or pour his efforts into charity work and he always had time for people". Friend and former Council colleague **Ian Roome** said "David did so much in his life to help so many people. He brought many smiles and happiness to those who knew him". **Dave Sharratt**, former **Principal** of what is now **Braunton Academy**, said, among many other points about Dave Butt's contribution to the school. "There will be many staff who have been nurtured, supported and advised by Dave. He championed continuous professional development for all members of staff at Braunton School. He was an immensely popular member of staff and he will be very sorely missed".

North Devon Councillor Brian Greenslade said "Dave was universally popular and had a great gift of getting people to do things on a voluntary basis and using these skills he was able to achieve a lot and deliver for our community. In recent times this was very evident in terms of the leadership he gave to the now annual and very successful Pilton Festival". "Dave was responsible for first setting up school visits to the charity's projects in Uganda," said **Phil Pugsley of Amigos Worldwide**, "and he helped to organise our fun days and was always on the end of the phone when you needed to know anything". **Alana Marie Smith**, director of fundraising at the hospice's Little Bridge House said: "We are all devastated by the sad news of Dave's death. It's hard to believe that only a few months ago he was pedalling on a seven-seater bike across the region for us".

Pilton will undoubtedly be a poorer place for the loss of Dave Butt. Many people across the community will miss his support and contribution. Among his Pilton legacies is a stronger Pilton Green Man Festival where his ability to bring people together and get things to happen has resulted in the growing involvement of the next generation of people willing to help the community come together effectively. His will be difficult shoes to fill but he surely did much to inspire people to pick up where sadly he has left off.