

GORDON DIVALL

2nd April 1926 - 7th July 2002

Colehill was shocked and saddened to learn of the sudden death of their much respected Parish Councillor, Gordon Divall, whilst he was on holiday with his wife Gwen in Sweden.

Gordon and Gwen moved to Colehill in 1960, and within eight years had established themselves into the community so well that Gordon was elected to the Parish Council. Apart from a few years when he was commuting to London and felt unable to give the committed time, he has actively and diligently served the community ever since.

Over the years he held the office of Chairman of Colehill Parish Council's Highways & Plans Committee and their Finance & General Purposes Committee - (the engine room of the Parish Council). He represented the Parish Council at innumerable District and County Council conferences and symposiums, was the Council's nominated Trustee of Mary Greathead's Education Foundation and for 12 years served as a voluntary Governor at Colehill County First School. He was also a member of the Joint Management Committee of Wimborne Cemetery where he has been laid to rest this week.

Gordon was a very active member of Colehill Parish Council for many years. He guided it through many of the constitutional and legislative changes that have been imposed on Parish Councils over the years. Recently he devoted himself with much time and diligence to the Council's acquisition from the National Trust of land including the area known as "The Triangle" bounded by the Church, the Post Office and the War Memorial. Not content with securing the purchase of the land, and with the able assistance of his wife, he masterminded an application to register The Triangle as a Village Green thus securing the land from any future development. It will, indeed, be a lasting and fitting memorial to Gordon to have this woodland dedicated for the recreational enjoyment of the people of Colehill.

Gordon Divall was elected Chairman of Colehill Parish Council from 1996 to 1998 when his leadership abilities, foresight and planning were put to good use. The Spring of 1996 saw the Centenary of Colehill Parish Council and much time and thought was given to the best way to mark

and commemorate this important time in the Council's history. Gwen was prevailed upon by Gordon to research and write-up a history of the village. Visits to Dorchester Records Office were organised, hours were spent going through the Minute books from 1896 and scrounging old photos and pictures of times past. The history was published in book form and was also printed onto large boards which were first displayed at Colehill's Annual Parish Reception in the Centenary year. It then became a travelling exhibition displayed in the Allendale Centre in Wimborne and taken to local schools. The boards are now on permanent display in the Committee Room at Colehill Memorial Hall.

A village sign was erected as a landmark for Colehill. Beneath the sign is buried a time capsule and several members of the Council stood by with him - in December - in the snow - and watched children from Colehill and Hayeswood First Schools lower this time capsule into the ground. Two years later, and in celebration of the Millennium, this village sign was complemented by the erection of a pictorial map of Colehill and the planting of displays of spring bulbs.

In his more active days, Gordon Divall would walk the local paths in his capacity as the Council's Rights of Way Officer reporting any problems he found and ensuring they were put right. As an example he spotted that two well used tracks linking Park Homer Drive and Middlehill Road were not registered as Rights of Way, so he prepared questionnaires to collect evidence of their usage and successfully oversaw their registration and inclusion in the definitive maps of the area.

The constant problem with unsightly litter remained one of Cllr Divall's anathemas. During his year as Chairman contractual arrangements were made for litter clearance on the Council's land backed-up by voluntary conservation workdays. He was certainly a worker - only last month he was seen working with the conservation volunteers and with his Gwen, cutting back bushes and picking up accumulated rubbish in and around "The Triangle".

Gordon Divall's remarkable knowledge, experience, perseverance and diligence will be sorely missed by all his fellow Parish Councillors whose thoughts go out to Gwen and their family.

Issued by Cllr John Bell
Chairman, Colehill Parish Council