



John Pearce

Community Development and Social Enterprise Thinker and Activist

Born: March 23rd, 1942

Died: December 12, 2011

John Pearce was a pioneering, influential force in community development and community enterprise - the precursor to social enterprise. For nearly fifty years, John's ideas, inspiration and exceptional talent for clear thinking were a driving force behind people-centred development with a strong focus on collective enterprise.

John brought a rare vision to community development that encompassed the simple idea that people who are disadvantaged for whatever reason can engage directly with economic solutions that will create jobs and services in their own communities and so take steps towards improving their quality of life.

John was Cornish, grew up in Truro and attended Truro School. After Cambridge, VSO and a diploma in Social Administration at the LSE, he and two others spent two years working with Tibetan refugees in Nepal helping to found a

village settlement - completed in 1967 - and named by the Dalai Lama as Tashi Ling or "Happy Place". John maintained links with Tibetans throughout his life.

After work with the Young Volunteer Force Foundation he headed up one of the Community Development Programmes, setting up community development projects in post-industrial west Cumbria.

In 1976 he and his family moved to West Lothian. He set up the Local Enterprise Advisory Project (LEAP) which grew into the influential Strathclyde Community Business (SCB) working with disadvantaged people in urban housing schemes in the west of Scotland.

From 1991 he worked freelance as a researcher, author and activist. Perhaps the most celebrated of his six books is the 2003 'Social Enterprise in Anytown'.

He was instrumental in developing the ideas, policies and practices of social accounting and audit which enables organisations with a social purpose to demonstrate their true social value to society.

John's energy and ability to gather people around ideas extended his influence across the UK, to Europe, India, Australia and New Zealand.

In West Lothian, John had a smallholding and was central to community action. He raised pigs for many years, grew vegetables and planted thousands of trees. His friends recall him as stubborn, not always patient, at times peremptory, generous, cooked a great fish pie, practical and organised. He was a great walker who twice covered the 250 mile coastal path around Cornwall.

John's library of papers and documents has been donated to Glasgow Caledonian University where it will become the foundation for the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland).

He is survived by his wife Joanna, brother Philip, sons Matthew and William, their partners Victoria and Hope, his grandchildren Jack and Pirran.

Alan Kay and Alan Tuffs – long-time friends and colleagues