

THE PLAYING FIELD

*Newsletter of
Surrey Playing Fields - April 2018*



GERRY CEASER



This issue is dedicated to the memory of our Chairman Gerry Ceaser

Everyone connected with Surrey Playing Fields is saddened to hear of the death of Gerry Ceaser, our Chairman, who died on Sunday 25th February 2018. He became a member of our Advisory Committee in 1998 representing the Surrey Sports Board. Gerry was a past Mayor of Spelthorne Borough Council and has been involved in many initiatives for sport and young people over the years. He was the patron of Surrey Youth Games, has been the Vice Chairman of the South East Regional Sports Board and had been temporary Chairman of the Active Surrey Sports Partnership.

In 2009 he became Chairman of Surrey Playing Fields. His extensive knowledge of local government and sporting bodies allowed us to stay in touch with the aims of our partners as we worked to ensure that there were improvements to playing fields in Surrey.

Recently he had been working with other County Playing Fields Associations and with Fields in Trust trying to improve levels of cooperation. His work with many organisations will be missed. We send our condolences to his family who supported him in his busy life.

For sports help throughout Surrey
Affiliated to the National Playing Fields Association





SFA have received a large number of letters of condolence following the sad news of Gerry's passing and some of the comments are shown below. We are advised that the funeral was a private one but that there will be a memorial service held at St Peter's Church in Staines on Friday 11 May and that a book of condolence is available to sign in the Spelthorne Borough Council Knowle Green office reception.

ARTICLE FROM THE SURREY ADVERTISER

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2018 **SURREY ADVERTISER** 7

Tributes paid to two-times mayor

THE man who led Spelthorne Borough Council during two spells a decade apart has died.

Gerry Ceaser, who was also twice mayor, died at the age of 75 at St Peter's Hospital in the early hours of Sunday, after a short illness.

Mr Ceaser's council career spanned 34 years, during which time he was leader from November 1995 to May 1997 and from May 2005 to April 2007.

The two-times mayor served on several committees and was chairman of the policy and finance; leisure and recreation; and planning committees and his achievements included leadership of Staines' town centre redevelopment.

In October 2007, Mr Ceaser was appointed Honorary Freeman of the Borough of Spelthorne.

His voluntary works included roles as governor of Bishop Wand School, setting up and serving on local and regional sports bodies - in particular Surrey Sport and the Surrey Youth Games - and serving as trustee of the National Association of Clubs for Young People

and as chairman of Middlesex Young People's Clubs, as well as setting up charity events like the Mayor's Fun Day and Sunbury's Picnic in the Park.

Mr Ceaser was a trustee of the Spelthorne Mayor's Charity Fund and chairman of the Ex-Mayors' Association and the ShopMobility charity.

Councillor Ian Harvey, leader of Spelthorne Borough Council, said: "We are very saddened by this news. Gerry had a passion for politics and an unfaltering desire to improve the lives of the borough's residents and the place will be all the poorer without him."

"He was my mentor and I will miss him greatly."

Mr Ceaser is survived by his wife of 54 years, Zandra, a son and daughter, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Former Spelthorne Council leader Gerry Ceaser

ACTIVE SURREY

Gerry had a long association with Active Surrey and was a great supporter of our organisation's work. In addition to the Active Surrey Partner Forum, which Gerry chaired from 2013 until his death, Gerry was also Chair of the Active Surrey Board from 2009 to 2013. As Mayor of Spelthorne, he was instrumental in setting up the Surrey Youth Games in 1997 and Chaired the SYG Management Group for nine years before stepping down to become Patron of the Games. He was also Chair of Surrey Playing Fields, working tirelessly to protect and improve green spaces and sports pitches and pavilions for future generations. In the 1990's, Gerry was also Vice Chair of the Regional Sports Board and Chair of the Surrey Sports Board. Active Surrey Director, Campbell Livingston, said "Throughout my time at Active Surrey, Gerry has been a constant presence, providing support, positive challenge and championing our work. Since I took over as Director, Gerry was particularly supportive to me personally and his passing is a great loss to sport in Surrey."

MERYL SMITH (SECRETARY – PLAYING FIELDS NETWORK)

As I expect you have picked up, all Gerry's colleagues in the Playing Fields Network Committee and the wider network generally have been shocked and saddened by his sudden decline and death.

We would like to send to Zandra and her family and to Surrey PFA a sincere message of condolence and also thanks for Gerry's significant contribution to helping us move forward with a national strategy to strengthen the CPFA movement. We will all miss him greatly: not only his company and sense of humour but also his enthusiasm, experience and wise counsel.

It would be a fitting tribute to his memory if the changes being made within the PFN were to succeed, as was his wish and vision.

Please do pass on to Zandra and her family and the members of the PFA the Playing Fields Network's condolences and our appreciation of all that Gerry has done for the CPFA movement nationally and locally.

PAUL PEACOCK (SECRETARY - KENT PFA)

I have just been informed of the recent death of Gerry Ceaser and wanted to pass on my condolences to his family and all colleagues at Surrey PFA. Apart from the vast contribution to the CPFA movement he did a lot of thoughtful work for the sub committee taking up valuable time and effort.

As a colleague within the playing field scene I enjoyed his company and wry sense of humour and we are all the poorer for his demise.

My deepest condolences

DALE MORTIMER (CHAIR - PLAYING FIELDS NETWORK)

We are very sad to learn of the recent death of Gerry Ceaser who has done so much for the playing field movement, both in Surrey and throughout the country. He has recently done invaluable work to survey the current state of CPFAs around the country and to help us to drive forward a national strategy aimed at strengthening our movement. His hard work and dedication will be missed and will be hard to replace.

We send our condolences to his family and to his friends in Surrey PFA.

BARRY HITCHCOCK (COUNTY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER - SPFA)

I first came across Gerry when, as Sports Director at the University of Surrey, I was invited to a meeting of Surrey Sport in 1996. Surrey Sport, with Gerry as Chairman, were gearing up for the first Surrey Youth Games and needed the use of some local sports facilities. He struck me as highly opinionated, that he knew exactly what he wanted and was thoroughly determined to overcome anything to get this major initiative happening. He was also adamant to get the best possible value from each and every situation. The London Youth Games had been running for some time and was gaining popularity and growing quickly and Gerry wanted to replicate as much as possible in Surrey. The Surrey Youth Games have been an outstanding success and are now in their 22nd year. The aim is to increase participation in Sport by young people who have had limited access to organised sporting opportunities and we can only guess at the staggering number of people who have benefitted over the intervening years. Gerry was always heavily involved in the annual continuation and growth and remained a committed supporter of the Games. Colleagues from Active Surrey will know much more of the detail, so I will not even attempt to cover it here. What I do know is that the sheer numbers involved, the wonderful support of the many essential volunteers and the obvious pleasure shown on the faces of the many young people and their families, were significant drivers in establishing the fundamental design of what eventually became the Surrey Sports Park which opened in 2010 and which grew directly from the old and dated sports provision at the University of Surrey.

Some years later in 2012, after retiring from my University position, I was invited to be part of Surrey Playing Fields, I teamed up once more with Gerry. He was still opinionated, still knew what he wanted and still determined to get the best value from each and every situation. By that time he had already instigated a restructure of Surrey Playing Fields to turn it into the organisation we see today with 12 Borough Development Officers in the 11 Surrey Boroughs.

Talking Sport with Gerry was never an easy conversation. On-going ill health for much of his early years had robbed him of an opportunity to actively take part in Sport as a youngster but he could readily recognise what it had done for many young people and was doubly determined to do all he could to make sure that participation was an option for as many young people as possible. In my humble opinion, he has right royally done that and although we will all miss his constant involvement and wise counsel, the legacy he leaves us with, is massive.

KAREN TONGE (CHESHIRE PFA)

He has done such a lot for his community, sport and playing fields over many years. I will miss his support and words of wisdom

ALEX WELSH (CHIEF EXECUTIVE - LONDON PLAYING FIELDS FOUNDATION)

This is terribly sad. A hugely impressive man who was a great champion for sport and playing fields. He will be sorely missed.

SOME PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES OF GERRY WORKING FOR SPFA



