

Obituary – Shirley Metherell, MBE

BATOD was saddened to learn that Shirley Metherell MBE had passed away. Shirley had been a Trustee of the Ewing Foundation since 2000. The Elizabeth Foundation, a charity providing early intervention, educational and support services for preschool children and babies with varying degrees of deafness, celebrated its forty years' anniversary this year

A page dedicated to Shirley's memory can be found at: <https://shirley-metherell.muchloved.com/>

Thank you to Pauline Hughes and David Braybrook for sharing these words:

It was with great sadness that I heard of Shirley's death on 4th August this year. I had known of her and her work since she and her husband David established The Elizabeth Foundation (TEF) in 1981.

This was the year I started work as a Peripatetic Teacher of the Deaf in Wandsworth, and very quickly, I knew of families who were making the trip to Portsmouth for their deaf preschool children to take part in TEF's oral programme.

The Foundation soon had a reputation for excellence in this field, but I learned what a driving force Shirley was when I became the CEO of the Ewing Foundation in 2005 and came to know her personally. She was a well-established, 'hands-on' trustee. Malcolm and Sheila McAlpine, who set up the Ewing Foundation, were extremely fond of Shirley and greatly respected her. Even when she became very ill, Shirley made the journey from Portsmouth to London to attend meetings whenever she could.

Together with DELTA (Deaf Education through Listening and Talking), the Ewing and Elizabeth Foundations set up a consortium in 1999 called 'Now We're Talking?' to promote auditory/oral approaches to deaf children's education. Lindsay Wood was the consortium's public face, attending conferences and exhibitions for 13 years to raise awareness of good practice and emergent assistive technologies.

Meanwhile, the work of TEF itself had gone from strength to strength, and when newborn hearing screening came into play, a fruitful partnership with Portsmouth NHS Hospital Trust was based in the Foundation's building. Currently, Southampton's Auditory Implant Service is sited in the building, together with Portsmouth Hospital's Newborn Hearing Screening Programme and Paediatric Audiology and Ear Nose and Throat Services.

My connections with Shirley were

further strengthened following the closure of Ovingdean Hall School, and this charity was renamed the Ovingdean Hall Foundation (OHF). The trustees were impressed with the work of TEF, and made a significant donation, enabling a much-needed building extension to go ahead – the Ovingdean Building.

As a former Headteacher of Ovingdean, I was invited to be a trustee of OHF, and was pleased to further support Shirley's work, not least TEF's online program for parents and practitioners: 'Let's Listen and Talk'. It's significant that even when Shirley retired from her work with TEF, the organisation had been set up so that it could continue without her personal input. That is a great legacy.

Pauline Hughes, *Trustee, Ovingdean Hall Foundation. September 2021*

I first learnt of the Elizabeth Foundation in 1981 when it was envisaged and created by Shirley and David. At that time I was working as a lecturer on the Oxford course. Their vision, commitment and determination created a much-needed pre-school initiative inspired by the John Tracy Clinic in the USA. Elizabeth, their recently diagnosed hearing-impaired daughter, was then almost two. I met Elizabeth ten years later when she came to Ovingdean Hall School for her secondary education when I was the Head. I was also at that time a trustee of the Ewing Foundation, and Malcolm and Sheila McAlpine who founded their charity nearly thirty years earlier when their son was born

with a profound hearing loss were great supporters of the Elizabeth Foundation. Sheila, in particular, recognised the importance and value of working with and supporting families with babies and children born with hearing loss.

Shirley's knowledge, wisdom and unflinching commitment to families and their children with hearing loss was immense. Her contribution in recent years as a trustee of the Ewing Foundation was an example of her continuing commitment to the work. She was a very talented, personable leader and a determined pioneer whose vision lives on in the much-valued work of the Foundation.

David Braybrook, *Educational Consultant (SEND), Head of Ovingdean Hall School 1983–93.*



Shirley Metherell

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The cover features a collage of five photographs: two women standing outdoors, a boy and a woman at a table with cards, a man signing, a woman with a child, and a child holding dolls.