



## Obituary: Keith 'Charlie' Childs

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Tributes have been paid across the table tennis family to Keith 'Charlie' Childs, a passionate advocate of the sport in so many areas, who has died at the age of 69.

Elected as one of three Deputy Chairmen of Table Tennis England last year, but steeped in the sport over many decades, his influence encompassed clubs, coaching, para table tennis, governance and many other areas.

He drew on a wealth of life experience as IT project manager at Ordnance Survey, for whom he worked for more than 30 years, in healthcare as a director for South East Hants Primary Care Trust, as owner of the TTLinks business and, in education, as Chairman of Governors at Fareham Academy.

Charlie was most associated with the Generation 2 Club, based at Fareham Academy, of which he was a founder member in 1970.

Charlie was the club's lead coach, having gained his UKCC Level 3 qualification, and was also a Coaching Tutor, Assessor and Internal Verifier.

At league level he was on the Gosport & Fareham Committee for a number of years, holding several positions including that of Chairman and he had been the Coaching and Development Officer since 1995.

As a player, he competed at several European and World Veteran Championships, as well as in British League and in the County Championships for Hampshire.

A member of the English Table Tennis Association (ETTA) Management Committee from 2008-11, he was Vice-Chairman of Coaching during this time and was on many ETTA committees as well as earlier holding posts on the South Regional Coaching Committee.

It was only last year that Charlie was elected by the membership to the Board of Table Tennis England as a Non-Executive Director. Previously he had been on the Board of British Para Table Tennis from 2015-19, stepping down when he took up his new role with Table Tennis England.



Charlie Childs at the Table Tennis England AGM in 2017 (photo by Diane Webb)

Table Tennis England Chairman, Sandra Deaton, said: "I had sat with Charlie on a previous management board and knew what an asset he would be to the current administration.

"He was a highly intelligent man with a wealth of life experience which he was able to use when inputting to our strategic and governance concepts.

"I would describe him as a leader. He led by example and in a nice way. He was devoted to table tennis, able to communicate with people, always helpful and supportive and in a kind and friendly way.

"He was very focused on development and coaching, passionate about the sport and helping players to be the best that they could be but without putting them under pressure.

"Our thoughts and condolences are extended to his family at this incredibly sad time."

Karen Tonge MBE, Chairman of British Para Table Tennis said Charlie had made a huge contribution to the organisation through the Governance and Risk Committee, leading the work needed to ensure BPTT complied with the Code for Sports Governance within the tight deadlines required by UK Sport. He also project managed the development of the new website.

She added: "Charlie was a man of great integrity and high values, as well as a warm and knowledgeable companion. He brought us his experience of his work at Ordnance Survey and his major volunteer roles in health and education.

"He had a wealth of knowledge and a lot to offer and was passionate about para table tennis."



Charlie coaching Jonny McMullan at the 2016 Cadet National Cup (photo by Alan Man)

Peter Charters from the Kingfisher club in Reading was another who knew Charlie over many years and sat alongside him on the ETTA Management Committee.

He said: "He really knew his table tennis and he was a club man – he worked incredibly hard and his contribution on management committees was excellent. Because of his life's work and his experience, he had a much broader knowledge than I did.

"He was a very good coach and a strong character and I was so glad he was going to be on the Board again. He really was a table tennis person through and through."

Members of the Generation 2 club have also been paying tributes. Club chairman Mike Cooksley said Charlie had left a long legacy with the club and added: "His personal drive to bring young people into table tennis and encourage others is something we have all witnessed and I am sure admired.

"Charlie enjoyed a successful playing career himself, with a strong forehand game and tactically astute, he was a tough competitor with many league and tournament trophies to his name."

Among the other comments from club members were:

- "He will be greatly missed by the club and was an inspiration and guide to many players at the club. It will be strange to go to the club and not see Charlie there anymore. I am personally very saddened by the news, and will miss his advice and encouragement."
- "He was an absolutely wonderful person and so generous with his time and expertise. I only knew him for three years or so but he was such an engaging and enthusiastic person."
- "His commitment to table tennis over the past 50 years or so has been outstanding."
- "One of Charlie's great passions was the twinning event between Generation 2 TTC Fareham and the AJK table tennis club from Vannes Brittany, the clubs have twinned yearly since the 1970s and great friendships have been formed between Charlie, many organisers on both sides of the channel and participants in that

time.”

Charlie suffered a stroke earlier this year and had been recovering well, but developed sepsis and passed away on Friday.

He leaves his wife, Janice, daughter Kathy and son-in-law Simon, plus a new grandson born this year, Isaac.

The funeral will be for family only, in line with current Government advice, but it is hoped to arrange a celebration of his life in the summer.



Charlie at a twinning event at Generation 2, with members of the AJK club from Brittany in 2018.

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