

## In Memory of Our Steve



The first day I met you we were on the MUGA pitch. We started talking about our pupils and how they were all better than they knew; it was just a matter of having committed staff to be there for them, give them the opportunities to shine and stand by them no matter what. We clicked instantly. Steve, I admired you from the outset; your honesty, your openness, your conviction and most of all, I admired how genuine you were.



Steve, you were always in touch with what was most important; that when you're working with kids, you build relationships and put in quality time with them. Any trip, day out, football match, your hand would be up first. You'd do the hard yards too; camping, in freezing cold water, standing on the touchline cheering our football teams on. I remember the day we were late getting to the Blood Brothers trip in Bradford and to get the kids there on time you drove all the way right up to the theatre doors in an 18 seater. You sat outside for the full show until it went dark as you couldn't leave the bus on yellow lines. Two and a half hours hanging about sitting there, still you never complained, it was no big deal. In your words : *"I'm your driver for the night as long as you kids had a great time."*



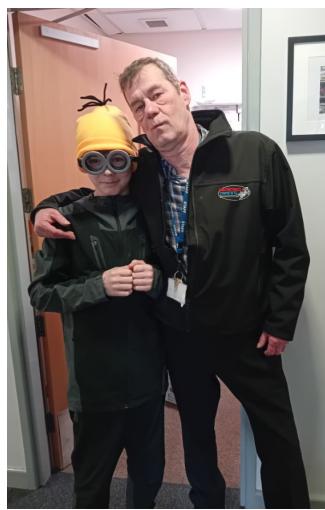
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Still, we all knew the drama student in you was never far from the surface. You loved literature, plays, theatre and we made sure that next year, you were watching that play no matter what. You loved that day and as always, your message to me that night was singing the praises of the kids :

*“Our kids were fantastic today and were a credit to our school. They were a joy to be with and deserve praise.” Text from Steve*

You would always sacrifice yourself for the sake of the kids; even your hair. I remember the day you let one of our budding ‘barbers’ in Year 11 loose on your hair! But, as always, you believed in giving kids a chance and building them up. By the looks of what happened you were definitely his first cut; basin cut, bald patches but rather than upset him and go to a Barbers to finish it off, you left it. As long as our pupil felt proud of what he’d done, you were happy to walk around with your new radical style. Ever the great encourager, you were still convinced the pupil was a born barber!



Steve I will always be grateful for you and forever miss your daily dose of positivity. You were the great encourager of others; generous in your praise, positivity and faith in others. It could be a text or a phone-call that night after a tough day and they always left me and other staff members, feeling that bit more hopeful or ready for the next day.

*“I love coming to work Paul.  
We will have an outstanding school”. Text from Steve.*

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The kids got the same. You praised them to high heaven, lifted them and gave them constant encouragement and believed in them when they struggled to believe in themselves.

*“We have kids who are potential social workers, teachers, actors or models. We just need to channel them in the right direction.” Text from Steve*

I never got to tell you how much you lifted us all. You really drew from the bottomless well of positivity when it came to our pupils; always a new plan, idea, dream for our pupils. Whether it was pool and pizza night, drama group, morning time for pupils, bricklaying after school, bringing Richard III to Newbridge Awards night. And you were bold. If it didn't work, let's try something else, always having the belief, faith and optimism to shake things up and make something happen.



This year's Christmas show, we saw Steve the drama student. Your enthusiasm was there from the get go, hands-on, constantly giving feedback on the script and spurring us on to get the show in the road. Still, you were never one to take the spotlight alone and whatever passion you had, you'd take the kids with you. This time you took the girls with you into the world of drama. As random as ever, you didn't want to be a king or a warrior, but Shakespearean witches from Macbeth. It was brilliant to see you let loose:

*“I can feel myself slipping into drama student mode again.” Text from Steve.*

I thought you'd be reading the lines. But never a man to do anything by halves, you'd learned the full soliloquy word for word and acted out every line; full theatrics and props of frogs, snakes and cauldrons. Halfway through, I noticed your voice kept changing. That's when I realised you were playing all three witches at once. It was a classic performance; creepy, funny, edgy and hilarious all at the same time! Your confidence, zero inhibitions and your

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ability to be silly and laugh at yourself shone bright that day and most importantly, you inspired the pupils to put on a show-stopping performance.

*“The kids have many talents that they need to realise. And they will”. Text from Steve.*



Steve you were a one off who broke the mould. You were never one to be pigeon holed; one minute the biker inspiring kids to go to Bike-Mech, the next minute a cat-loving, Shakespearean witch in face paint and lycra. One night, Richard the III wrapped in a purple blanket, hump on the back, limping through parents while reciting a full Shakespearean soliloquy, the next night a bricklayer in overalls with the Y11s. That was your strength; whatever the kids needed you moulded to them!

Being a champion of the underdog was always part of your vision and a huge legacy you have left, is your faith in and ability to take the hardest to reach pupils and make them feel part of the Newbridge family. Today, I look at ‘your pupils’ and you can see they feel valued, happy and a real sense of belonging in our Newbridge Learning Community

Wherever you went, your pupils followed; they’d have followed you to ends of earth.

*“Brilliant day today boss. I feel we will get the pupils on board. They were an absolute joy to be with. We are definitely on the right track with the nurture plan.” Text from Steve.*

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You soon became nicknamed the “Pied Piper with his Merry Men” which gave you a giggle. Your pupils are now a credit to you Steve! You believed they could mentor each other and eventually the pupils were actually looking after each other and following your lead as mentors and role models :

*“That was a very positive week boss. My pupils were an absolute pleasure this morning, digging deep inside and sharing it with me touched me greatly. They supported each other by speaking about what scares them, their worries, concerns and past histories. They were so calm collected and thoughtful.” Text from Steve.*



Steve, you really did bring everything of yourself to the job. Your love of motorbikes inspired the model of Bike-Mech and in Ken, the owner’s words: “There would be no Bike-Mech without Steve!” You helped get Bike-Mech where it was today with your enthusiasm, vision and can-do attitude.

Steve, you had a rare quality; you were always so open and direct in telling people how you felt about them which I found truly inspiring. Every week, staff would get a Friday dose of positivity. I never got to tell you those Friday messages and phone calls were a great source of inspiration, confidence and comfort to me personally. They always got to what was most important and pushed me on. From me to you, thanks :

*“We will move mountains as a team.”*

*“Everyone is behind you.”*

*“Things have surprised me and given me a buzz, particularly the mentoring scheme. I love working for you and our deputy.” Texts from Steve.*

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You were an inspirational to the pupils. I think we are all bereft of some encouragement and positivity at times, so when a bit of genuine praise came from yourself, it made the people around you feel 10ft tall.

You naturally understood KS4 pupils thrive off responsibility, looking out for others and being good role models. I know how proud you were of our year 11 pupils following in your footsteps as young mentors to our younger pupils:

*"The irony is if we have the year 10s and 11s on board the job becomes far easier less stressful and fun." Texts from Steve.*

*"If we get the year 10s and 11s on board as mentors, life becomes easier for everyone and the mentors have a great positive for their CV." Texts from Steve.*



Steve, you were a great colleague, brilliant friend, father figure, role model, mentor, comedian, actor, champion and supporter of others. The staff and pupils are heartbroken but we will continue to follow your vision and do you proud. In your words:

*"We will make Newbridge a flagship school completely engaged in the community where the kids and staff buzz and want to come in everyday. Even weekends. It can and will be done!" Texts from Steve.*

Steve, we miss you so much and every child and member of staff whose hearts you have touched, we will make sure your legacy lives on in Newbridge. Thanks for being you Steve. From Paul, the staff and pupils at Newbridge L.C. x



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