

February 2016
Reference Jayl De Lara

The first meeting I had with Jayl was when he presented himself as a candidate to become a member of the Ruardean Parish Council. He and his wife, Niki, had moved into the old Angel Inn where they had established Harmony School. This was an exciting new venture for the village and surrounding area. As its Principal, Jayl taught local people of all ages, providing lessons, sessions and workshops in singing, poetry and music production.

Jayl was also a mentor, providing support and guidance for young or troubled people by helping them build confidence and self-esteem. In this respect he helped people to identify positive solutions to their problems so that they could lead more positive lives.

In the course of time we shared common interests such as history and the preservation of the ancient Forest of Dean and its many traditions. To this end, we sourced artefacts and historical articles for a display montage. Jayl demonstrated considerable talent in enthusing others during preparations for village events. He made a huge contribution to the village carnivals and became a Master of Ceremonies - putting his musical skills to further good use. During our Remembrance Services, his renditions of poems were exceedingly moving and beautiful.

Prior to leaving Ruardean, he arranged a musical contribution in the setting of the ancient Norman Church (built circa 1111).

It was very sad to see Jayl and Niki leave Ruardean. Their presence in the village brought us warmth and many happy times. When it was time for them to leave, many of their past students helped with the removals. Such a gesture says it all. They had touched the hearts of so many of us. Although Jayl and Niki have now moved to Kent, their contribution to Ruardean village will live on.

Jayl is a truly gifted musician who is keen to share his knowledge and is able to inspire those around him. He has a rare and genuine talent to bring communities together. In this respect, I have no hesitations to recommend him.

Yours sincerely
Councillor Andrew Gardiner