

Teachers with true vocation



Related Stories

—

Teacher Sally Kyles said everybody has had to make sacrifices in the school where staff worked for free.

She is one of nine staff who have worked unpaid at Dilwyn CE Primary, near Leominster in Herefordshire for 18 months to keep it going.

Formerly St Mary's CE Primary School, it was closed in August 2011 by the county council after being deemed "financially unviable".

On Monday it opened its doors as a free school with 24 pupils after being run as a non-fee paying independent school.

Mrs Kyles, an early years teacher and now in a paid position, said: "It was hard at times, I worked out I could only afford to do it for a year but I knew we just had to keep going.

"It's been worth it and absolutely fantastic because what we really wanted was the long term security of the school and the funding.

"The support we've had from the village has been wonderful and it's brought expertise into the school by other people volunteering to help with subjects like dance and music so the children have really benefitted.

"We've all had to make a few sacrifices and it's meant less treats for the children but they knew why we were doing it and agreed it was important."

'Financial struggle'

Mrs Kyles said the whole village had got behind the campaign to save it.

"Parents have helped clean the school building and paint the walls, they've done it for themselves," she said.

Annette Blyth, from nearby village Eardisland, was due to be appointed as a teacher at the school when the council took the decision to close it.

She said: "I'd taken a career break from my old job due to family health reasons but wanted to get back to teaching because I love it so much.

"There was never a point when I wanted to stop because the children here are so lovely.



"It was a struggle some days especially when petrol prices went up and although it's not very far for me to get here it's still money and I think that was my main worry."

Peter Kyles, Dilwyn's new head teacher, has been involved since the campaign began.

He said: "The team here have given up so much over the last two years but the village will die if we don't have a village school.

"It's a thriving community and people are just not prepared to give up. The fact we bought and saved the village pub [last year] is a good example.

"We're very lucky we have a number of strong people who want to keep things going."

The Telegraph