



## Ken Rushton

It is with a heavy heart that we announce that Ken Rushton, former IBE director and trustee, died on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

Ken was a force to be reckoned with. He joined the IBE after a life-long career in the company secretarial function of Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI). He was appointed Company Secretary in 1996 and took early retirement in 1999 to take up the position of Director of the Institute of Business Ethics.

At that time, business ethics wasn't the buzz-word that it is today, and Ken worked hard to professionalise the Institute. He was the driving force in its establishment as an independent charity in 2000. These were hard times for the IBE. He worked tirelessly to engage companies and to raise funds, with a skeleton staff of four. Cash flow was an issue, and there were months where he worked in arrears, so that the admin staff could be paid.

At that time, it could be an uphill struggle to get ethics taken seriously, but, in 2001, the collapse of Enron and Worldcom gave a stark warning as how important it was for boards and senior leadership to consider the ethical aspects of how they did their business. Aside from that, emerging issues were beginning to have an impact on companies' reputations - like sweatshop/child labour in the supply chain; globalisation; and the ethical aspects of what at that time we called 'information technology'.

With Simon Webley, Ken commissioned reports on these topics, ahead of them being mainstream issues. They set up our first Business Ethics Network, a place where IBE supporters could meet and discuss these issues and the challenges they faced in this emerging role. However, Ken was ambivalent about the growth of E&C functions, believing that, while important, ethics should not be a distinct business function, but is better managed strategically in terms of organisation culture.

Ken also championed small businesses and was chair of local Business Link, a government funded small business advice network. He believed that the IBE's mission didn't just include large companies, and commissioned Dr Laura Spence to write *Priorities, Practice and Ethics in Small Firms*

He believed whole-heartedly that business ethics was not just a 'soft issue' but a business imperative. "In today's world, business success depends on sustainability," he wrote in *Business Ethics: a European Review*, foreshadowing the current debate about purpose. "This in turn depends on respect for the environment, employees, customers and stakeholders at large. Thinking about ethics in terms of sustainability involves thinking about ethics in strategic terms. Indeed sustainability could and should be raised to the status of a global ethic."

In 2001, Ken was appointed to the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as Director of Listing and Head of the UK Listing Authority and became responsible for directing the review of the UK Listing regime. He remained passionate about ethics and corporate governance, editing *The Business Case for Corporate Governance* and returned to the IBE as a trustee in 2013. As a trustee, we benefited from his knowledge, foresight and commitment to the IBE's mission to encourage high standards of business behaviour and in leading the dissemination of business ethics knowledge and good practice.

When he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2016, he was determined to ward off its progress for as long as he could, remaining a trustee until last year and continuing to support and challenge us in our work. He endured his illness with the same humour and courage with which he had led the IBE.

A service of thanksgiving will be held at 2pm, on 29th March, at St James' Church, Shere. Donations, are welcomed to Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice or MNDA.