

## ***Hebden Bridge Community Association***



Media release

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### COMMUNITY-RUN TOWN HALL TO HONOUR COOPERATIVE PIONEER

The community-run Town Hall in Hebden Bridge is to commemorate the memory of a leading national cooperative pioneer. A ceremony being held later this month will see the Town Hall committee room renamed the Greenwood Room, in honour of one of the town's forgotten heroes Joseph Greenwood.

Joseph Greenwood, who was a fustian cutter by trade, became a leading figure in the nineteenth century cooperative movement in Britain, and led for many years the pioneering Hebden Bridge Fustian Manufacturing Co-operative Society, a successful employee-managed business which operated from 1870 until 1918. Greenwood was also responsible for educational developments locally, including the establishment of the Hebden Bridge Mechanics' Institution. He was on the local council for over thirty years.

The event is taking place during the first-ever Co-operatives Fortnight, designed to celebrate the past and present success of cooperation in Britain. The renaming of the committee room as the Greenwood Room will be performed on Monday June 21<sup>st</sup> by Dame Pauline Green, the President of the International Cooperative Alliance, the global organisation representing all parts of the cooperative movement. Dame Pauline, previously the head of Cooperatives UK, is also a former leading MEP.

Also speaking on June 21<sup>st</sup> will be local historian Justine Wyatt, who has made a particular study of the life of Joseph Greenwood.

“What could be more appropriate than to have a room in our Town Hall dedicated to the memory of a Hebden Bridge man, the son of poor handloom weavers, who by the time of his death in 1924 was well-known nationally, and indeed more widely in Europe, for his work in the cooperative movement?” says Andrew Bibby, for Hebden Bridge Community Association, which took control of the Town Hall through an asset transfer arrangement with Calderdale council in April this year. The Community Association itself operates according to cooperative principles and is a member of Coops UK.

Interestingly, the surname Greenwood has long been especially associated with Hebden Bridge. According to the National Trust Names survey, based on academic research and now on the NT website, there are more Greenwoods proportionately in Hebden Bridge than in any other postal town in the country.

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