

Colchester NSPCC Book Fair: the final chapter

It's all over. Almost.

After 33 years the annual local Book Fair will close its doors for the last time after this year's event – set to be the biggest ever - on Saturday November 1st and Sunday November 2nd at The Stanway School, Winstree Road (CO3 0QA)

Initially launched by late West Bergholt villager Ann Lansdown, the event has attracted tens of thousands of book lovers over more than three decades and has raised well over £550,000 for the childcare charity.

The upcoming two-day event will feature more than 40,000 carefully sorted donated books plus jigsaws, games CDs and DVDs.

Margaret Jones, one of the Book Fair organisers, said: "Calling time has not been an easy decision but we have been hit by a double whammy. Some of our long-standing key volunteers are retiring and we have seen dramatically escalating overhead costs which are impacting the viability of the event."

She added: "We would like to thank our sponsors and volunteers who have returned year after year to enable us to raise valuable funds for the NSPCC – and we plan to make this, our final year, one to remember."

NSPCC Divisional Vice-President Pat Laurie added: "Book lovers travel to our Book Fair from far and wide to bag bargains by their favourite authors or on special subjects. This year will be a truly bumper event."

Colchester High Steward, Sir Bob Russell, said: "I salute those who, over the past 33 years, have organised this fantastic annual event – raising huge sums for such a worthy good cause. "The organisational commitment, all of it voluntary, has been significant. "It is a sad reflection on modern times that such voluntary commitment is now in such short supply. Too few people nowadays have the commitment which those had who ran the book fair over so many years."

Funds raised locally support three NSPCC initiatives: its Schools Service, which delivers safeguarding information to local primary schools; the organisation's Helpline for adults concerned about a child's welfare and Childline, its lifeline for troubled youngsters who have nobody else to turn to for help.

The NSPCC relies on public support for over 80% of its annual income, through fundraising activities, legacies, gifts and donations.

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

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