

MANIFESTO

A call to make common cause

More than a bookshop.

The People's Bookshop always aspired to be more than a bookshop. When we welcomed our first customers up that winding, uneven staircase and into our beautiful attic in 2011, we had a vision of creating a community hub, a space for the free flow of ideas; a place where those ideas could be realised in the hustle and bustle of organising activity. This was to be a gathering place for radical Durham.

What we didn't quite foresee was how the progressive people of Durham and the wider North East would take our little bookshop into its heart. Here was a DIY collective that became base camp for like minds, where young and old could come together, to teach and inform one another - a thriving space to talk, organise and create. Our music, poetry and author sessions live long in the memory. In the People's Bookshop, another world was possible.

Community and solidarity.

In the ten years since we opened our doors, the People's Bookshop has been an incubator for much of what is good in Durham – a focus for community and solidarity. There have been special moments aplenty: the place still reverberates with the 'Women of the Working Class', sung by the wonderful Women Against Pit Closures; the energy at the end of Joe Solo's 'Why are you so angry?' is still tangible. The atmosphere on Big Meeting Day is always electric.

Through this gem at the heart of Durham, our proud history has been celebrated. The alternative history of miners fighting back; of the poll tax being defeated; of gays and lesbians mobilising against Section 28, of internationalism and anti-racism. In the pages of the books we sold, the events we hosted and the activity we encouraged, that story was told and history was created anew. The important role of the People's Bookshop was epitomised during the recent, extraordinary upsurge in political engagement, especially amongst young people.

The first ten years and the next.

The first ten years of the People's Bookshop has helped to expand radical politics in County Durham by educating, agitating and organising. On those foundations, we will build a stronger and more vibrant community around us, so those who dare to imagine a better world have a focal point and a source of hope for change.

Far too many independent bookshops have closed through lack of deep community support. Despite the commercial pressures, we are determined to lay down solid foundations that will underpin the People's Bookshop's future.

That future will be grounded, co-operative and inclusive. It will win hearts and minds for progressive causes. The People's Bookshop will welcome people of all ages so that we can learn from each other and create solidarity in the struggles to enhance our communities and our world. And we will have fun along the way.

CAUSE

Our purposeful vision

We are a vital resource for those who dare to imagine another world is possible, providing space for the free flow of ideas, a place to educate, agitate and organise and, above all, hope for a fairer society.

AMBITION

Where will we be in 10 years' time?

Deeply rooted, driving change.

Our aim to be more than a bookshop will be realised, with a series of radical, community projects happening across County Durham and the North East, laying down roots in our communities, driven by our network of enthusiastic, engaged volunteers and held together by a focused and sustainable, People's Bookshop hub.