

The family of Peta Birch have asked me to say some words on their behalf on this very sad occasion.

They would like to thank you all for being here with them to pay your respects to Peta who tragically passed away on the 27th of March. Words cannot express how devastated her family is.

Peta made the Algarve her home for the last 43 years. Peta's many different roles made her a very special person. She was always busy, bringing energy, passion, dedication, humor, compassion, skill, and knowledge to everything she did. She also had so much love and time for her husband, children, sisters and extended family.

'Dona' Peta was very active in the community. For 35 years she helped the Santa-Casa de Misericórdia of Albufeira, working with the Casa dos Pirlampos, Casa do Paz, and the Gaivota home for children, as well as in many other initiatives.

For the last 3 years she also found time to foster over 70 puppies and set up a horse welfare group.

More recently she has been involved with Roma communities in Albufeira, assisting with healthcare and educational improvement.

She never liked to draw attention to herself, only to the work she did to help the vulnerable and voiceless through the many causes she supported.

You can gauge if a life has been well lived by looking at the reaction of family, friends and acquaintances when they hear of your passing. From the number of tributes over the last few days, it is clear that Peta's life was lived to the full. The guidance, advice, respect and love given by her will continue to guide the people closest to her as our lives go on.

Even though it is tragic that such a beautiful human being is no longer with us, we are sure that Peta would not want people to dwell on the sadness of her passing. Her wish would be for us all to celebrate her life in some way. The next time you smell fresh lavender on the breeze think of her. Take a walk on a deserted, wintry Portuguese beach and find a shell or skipping stone. Pick a wild flower or two while exploring the hills and backcountry of the Algarve that she loved so much.

But most of all take some time to smile and remember a life well lived.