

TCTC NEWSLETTER

Dates for your Diary!

The Lived Experience Network

Monthly drop-in meetings on the **last Thursday** of every month (except December)

10.30am – 12.00pm

Online via Zoom

The International Group

Friday 19th June

1:30 – 2.30pm

Online via Zoom

The Virtual Conference- 'Containment in the Cloud'

Wednesday 29th April 2026

12:00-17:00

Thursday 30th April 2026

08:45-14:00

Online via Zoom

TC Competencies: The 'why' and the 'how'

Thursday 14th May

09:00-12:00

Thursday 21st May

09:00-12:00

Online via Zoom

TCTC Conference- The Cost and the Value:

Therapeutic Communities and Sustainable

Organisations

Sunday 27th September-Wednesday 30th September 2026

For more information about our working groups,
training workshops or events,
please visit our website or send an email:
<https://therapeuticcommunities.org/training>
admin@therapeuticcommunities.org.

Dear TCTC Members,

Welcome to Issue 4 of the TCTC Newsletter.

As we move into 2026, this edition offers a powerful reminder of what sits at the heart of therapeutic communities: relationships, reflection, and the shared commitment to learning together. Across these pages, we see how therapeutic thinking continues to evolve – not only through research and professional practice, but through lived experience, creativity, and the courage of communities willing to think deeply about their work.

This issue brings together a rich range of contributions that highlight the breadth of our network. From reflections on therapeutic governance and organisational containment, to deeply moving accounts of transformation within communities, we are reminded that therapeutic work happens at every level – in leadership, in teams, and in the everyday moments of care and connection. The stories shared here demonstrate how environments grounded in therapeutic communities and relational practice can support growth, resilience, and hope, even in the face of significant challenge.

You will also find opportunities to connect and participate in the life of TCTC, whether through upcoming events, conferences, networks, or contributions to future newsletters. Our strength as a consortium lies in the diversity of voices within it – practitioners, researchers, members with lived experience, and organisations learning alongside one another.

I would like to extend sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition. Each article reflects generosity in sharing knowledge, experience, and reflection with the wider community. It is through this collective willingness to contribute that TCTC continues to grow as a space for dialogue, curiosity, and mutual support.

As always, we warmly welcome future submissions – reflections, research, creative work, or examples of practice – so that this newsletter continues to represent the many ways therapeutic communities are lived in and developed across our network.

I hope you find inspiration, encouragement, and new ideas within these pages.

Neels, Editor, TCTC Newsletter

CONTAINMENT IN THE CLOUD
TCTC VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY 29TH APRIL 2026 PM

THURSDAY 30TH APRIL 2026 AM



(ONLINE VIA ZOOM)



Exploring care, risk, connection and the craft of online relationality

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS:

Dr Kate Brown and Thomas Keaney

"Mary Shelley's Warning"

Attachment based psychoanalytic
psychotherapist

Building Safety, Belonging and Containment in
Digital Spaces

Plus UK and International speakers from:

Mulberry Bush Outreach, UK

Mosaic TC, India

Relationships at Work, Republic of Ireland

SUN, UK

Durga Menon, India

Suzanne Warren, UK

TICKETS

Day Ticket (Member) £45.00
Full Conference (Member) £75.00

Day Ticket (Non-member) £60.00
Full Conference (Non-member)
£90.00

Day Ticket (Student/ Unwaged)
£10.00
Full Conference (Student) £15.00

Group Tickets also available



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<https://therapeuticcommunities.org/>



The Consortium for Therapeutic Communities

Come and Join Us!

TCTC Consultancy

TCTC is a rich network of practitioners, academics and researchers, often with many years of living and working experience in a variety of contexts. We are able to offer access to consultants to support organisations with a wide variety of tasks. TCTC acts as the umbrella organisation, holding DBS, proof of qualifications and relevant insurances.

We have a straightforward approach to contracting, where the scope of work and the time and schedule are agreed at the beginning of projects.

TCTC is the invoicing organisation and consultants offer their time to the charity at heavily reduced rates to support modest income generation whilst also sharing their expertise, both of which help the charity achieve its aims.



TCTC Commissioning

In response to the national challenges for Local Authorities (LAs) in the commissioning of sufficient volume and diversity of specialist provision, TCTC is now working with the public sector either on individual LA or regional/sub-regional clusters to support commissioning and placement activity.

What is 'therapeutic': how do we know what models we should be considering, what features and structures might we expect to see to ensure robust delivery? In parallel, increasing numbers of LAs are seeking to encourage specialist provision, perhaps through 'specialist' or 'therapeutic' lots or tiers on frameworks or Dynamic Purchasing Vehicles (DPVs). Yet there are challenges in knowing how to approach these, what to specify, how to assess governance.

email: admin@therapeuticcommunities.org
for more information



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Meet the Board: Kevin Gallagher

Please share your name, organisation, how long you have been a Trustee and your role (if any) on the Board.

Dr Kevin Gallagher, Director/Trustee at Amberleigh Care which is an employee owned, social enterprise – I have been with Amberleigh for over 10 years now. I'm a founding Director/Trustee for TCTC and have been on the board since its formation back in 2013, I was Chair of TCTC from 2014-2022.

Can you share a few details about your professional history, where you studied, organisations you have worked with, paid/voluntary roles you've had, details of any published work, presentations, interviews?

I've worked in and with therapeutic childcare and education for 30 years – initially qualifying as a social worker in the late 90's and starting my residential carer within the local authority. I became an 'acting Manager' quite quickly, and after 18 months moved into my first independent sector role managing a home for 6 young boys who had suffered serious abuse. This was my first experience of working with therapists to support the residential work. That organisation grew and my role grew with it, into a middle and then senior management roles and this is where I learned a lot about the different operational considerations – HR, staff development, governance, changing regulations etc. My application of 'therapeutic' systems evolved across the same period. I progressed into national roles with larger services and was able to undertake additional qualifications – a Masters in Psychodynamic Consultation in 2009, and then an MBA in 2013. Alongside this journey I came into contact with practice charity The Charterhouse Group and became a Trustee and then Chair, and this charity then merged (with the Association of Therapeutic Communities) to form TCTC and so that has been a constant for me. I was fortunate to be able to undertake my PhD – 8 years part time in the background of very busy full time roles but deepened my understanding and confidence. I have been parts of lots of networks, steering groups, committees, podcasts, print interviews etc and present at conferences and deliver training. Everything I'm interested in seems to overlap and 'cross fertilise' and I really enjoy and am stimulated by the work with young people.

Meet the Board: Kevin Gallagher

What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?

Academically, achieving my PhD– I'm committed to ongoing and life-long learning, and engaging with that most structured and rigorous process is a real expression of that (having left school at 16!). More generally, I would say the cumulative impact that I have had in young peoples (and staff) lives over the years – its remarkable work and a privilege to be involved in helping people grow, and I've been around long enough now that I get to see some of the impact of that work in the (now) adults that I used to care for..

What is your most treasured possession?

Tricky...my husband would say that I'm a bit of a hoarder – so there isn't anything that immediately leaps out. I would probably say my wedding ring. As a gay teenager in the 1980's, marriage wasn't an option then, discrimination was rife, gay life was underground and both exciting and scary – things looked bleak when I tried to imagine what a 'happy life' would look like (it turned out ok in the end). Age 50 I met my husband to be (who would have thought!)

Is there a quote that you identify with, or that reflects your mood today?

I'm not sure who it is originally attributed to, but 'if you can't change the people, change the people' has resonated for me across the years and I see this as very rooted in therapeutic practice (indirectly!). For me it speaks to the detailed personal development work that has happen in helping professions in order for staff to use themselves in relationships. You have to be very clear on task, boundaries, responsibility and accountability to sustain practice, so working with individual and organisational defences is a key part of managing and leadership. You have to be resilient yet soft, firm but fair, clear but flexible – it's not for everyone.

Who do you admire the most?

I'd probably say my Mum here – I'm fortunate that she has been a constant in my life, an encourager, facilitator, carer, educator, champion, nurse (and all the other roles you can think of) to her 4 children, across a lifetime of the inevitable ups and downs. I wouldn't be where I am now without the things she has given me over the years.

What do you like most about being on the TCTC board?

I think one of the things I enjoy the most is the focus on offering solutions to our wider sectors, that are robust and based on long-established evidence and experience. We have such knowledge, history and talent in our sectors already – relationships work, and we know how to sustain and harness them.

What are your hopes for the future of TCTC, and how would you like to see the membership grow?

TCTC is an important voice in our UK children's social care system (specifically), and I'm thrilled that more and more policy makers and local authorities are engaging with our knowledge to help address the challenges in our system. I'd like to see more LA and public sector members. It's a place of relationships, sharing, support and thinking...just what we (they) need!



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<https://therapeuticcommunities.org>



MY TRIBE

Governance can often be seen as something procedural or distant from day-to-day care. To truly unlock the therapeutic potential of Governance, it has to be done differently. When done well, governance is not separate from therapeutic practice, it is one of the ways an organisation thinks, reflects, and holds itself in service of children who have experienced trauma.

Therapeutic governance creates the conditions in which care can be delivered safely, ethically, and with emotional integrity. It is an exercise in containment. A space where practice can be examined with curiosity rather than defensiveness, where complexity can be held, and where difficult questions can be explored without losing sight of our primary task. In therapeutic communities, this matters deeply. Without clear, relational governance, communities risk being pulled toward the same patterns of overwhelm, rigidity, or reactivity that the young people we support are working so hard to move beyond.



Our Therapeutic Practice Governance Board Day brought this into sharp focus. By bringing together organisational leaders, Registered Managers, and external experts in the theoretical disciplines that underpin our work, therapeutic community practice and Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP), the day modelled governance as a relational process, not a distant audit. TCTC's own, Peter Clarke and chair of DDPI, Dr Billy Smythe encouraged us not to think exclusively about outcomes but rather focus on understanding the emotional life of the organisation and the therapeutic tasks we ask our teams to hold every day.



Through shared reflection on a child's journey, the Board grounded governance firmly in lived experience. Exploring how early trauma shapes behaviour, relationships, and expectations of adults reminded us that strategic decisions are never abstract. They shape the emotional realities of daily life in our homes — influencing how safe children feel, how regulated teams remain, and how consistently our values are translated into action. In this sense, governance becomes a bridge between intention and impact.



Contributions from our external Board members reinforced this relational understanding. Reflections on crisis highlighted that moments of rupture are not failures of the system, but communications, signals that call individuals and organisations back to their identity, values, and primary task. Discussions of DDP further emphasised that therapeutic culture must cascade through every layer of the organisation, from leadership decisions and governance structures to everyday interactions between staff and young people.

What emerged across the day was a shared sense of clarity and confidence. Governance was experienced not as control, but as containment; not as compliance, but as care. The Board recognised the progress already made across our homes, while setting thoughtful, grounded intentions for the year ahead, strengthening reflective practice, developing leadership capacity, and deepening our shared therapeutic language.

At My Tribe Homes, governance is most effective when it does exactly this: when it holds the organisation steady enough to think, reflective enough to learn, and grounded enough to remain true to its primary task. Our recent Therapeutic Governance Board Day was a clear example of governance as a living, relational, and deeply therapeutic act, one that supports our communities to remain safe, connected, and developmentally focused for both children and adults alike.



Harry Lukens, Therapeutic Lead, My Tribe Homes



You are invited to share your experience or insights of Therapeutic Communities at The Elly Jansen Award 2026.

Therapeutic communities have long been recognised as an effective therapeutic tool for people facing challenges, including mental health issues and addiction.

The Elly Jansen Award aims to celebrate the positive work of therapeutic communities, share knowledge, raise awareness and encourage new research into their effectiveness.

The Award is a legacy of the late Elly Jansen OBE a prominent figure in the development of therapeutic communities globally, who cared passionately about making the work of therapeutic communities more widely known.

It's free to enter and open to anyone with experience of living or working in therapeutic communities or related fields.

There are two categories:

The Award for Original Articles for any written work about the ideas, practices, or your own experiences with therapeutic communities or relational practice.

The Award for Research Proposals for new research into the effectiveness or practice of therapeutic communities. Winners of both awards will receive cash prizes and will have the opportunity to have their work published and shared internationally through our networks and at the prestigious TCTC conference later this year.

Entries close at midnight (GMT) on Sunday, 3 May 2026.

Share your voice and find out more:

www.ellyjansenaward.org



Elly Jansen OBE (left), was a pioneer in mental health & therapeutic communities

Celebrating innovation and creative approaches to therapeutic communities and relational practice globally.

The Elly Jansen Award is established and managed by Community Housing & Therapy (CHT)
Registered charity number (England & Wales): 1040713. Elly Jansen, 1929 - 2025

Polyfonia grew out of INDTC, the International Network of Democratic Therapeutic Communities, an organisation that for many years brought people together to share ideas about therapeutic communities. In 2025, the INDTC committee decided to change our name and relaunch as 'Polyfonia: The International Network of Democratic and Community-based Relational Practice' in order to reflect our broader goal to connect people and organisations worldwide who are developing or supporting democratic, relational ways to support those experiencing mental distress.

Polyfonia aims to:

Provide an inclusive platform for people worldwide, especially from the Global South and other regions, who support those experiencing mental distress.

Build new connections and highlight different perspectives to create a polyphony of diverse ideas and creative approaches that will help shape the future of democratic and relational approaches in mental health support.

Host online and in-person events where people can discuss and share ideas about democratic, community-based relational practice.

Share best practices through papers, videos, and articles that offer international perspectives.

The word 'polyfonia' is written in a lowercase, sans-serif font. Each letter is a different color: 'p' is green, 'o' is yellow, 'l' is purple, 'y' is orange, 'f' is brown, 'o' is pink, 'n' is blue, and 'i' is dark blue.

We are just developing our website at www.polyfonia.org. At the moment you can see some of INDTC's history, biogs of the Polyfonia international committee, and sign up for news and updates. Memberships will be open from the beginning of March, and from April Polyfonia will begin hosting events from around the world, starting with a discussion group facilitated by Mariana Puchivailo from Brasil and Peter Cockersell from the UK. There will be a webinar and membership meeting in May hosted from India by Hena Faqurudheen, and there will be a Polyfonia event every month throughout 2026 leading up to a Conference in Delhi in early 2027. Check the website for times and dates, and to sign up.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a new organisation at its inception and to be part of something that will share ideas, thoughts and experiences from across the world. We very much look forward to meeting you at our upcoming events in April and May.

From criminality to compassion:

Trauma informed responses to children and young people



Tuesday 19th May 2026

£20 student £99 TCTC members £145 non-members

Confirmed Speakers

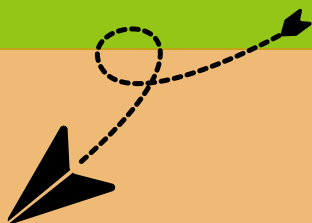
- *Mark Cox (Chair)*, Head of Oversight at YJB Cymru
- *Lil Nuttall*, Clinical Manager at Amberleigh Care
- Representative from 4C's- Childrens Commissioning Consortium Cymru
- *Aliyah Ali*, CEO of Daddyless Daughters project CIC
- *Dr Caroline Hoskins and James Perdue*, FACS
- *Nikki Holmes*, Director of Safer Together
- *Katherine Proudman and Alexandra Cometson* – Keys Group

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The Consortium for Therapeutic Communities Reflections...



From the Edge to Empowerment: A Reflection on Therapeutic Care in Action

By Harry Lukens, Therapeutic Lead, My Tribe
Homes

In therapeutic residential care, we often talk about “holding in mind” the lived experiences of the young people we support. We speak about trauma, about relational repair, about modelling safety and co-regulation. But every now and then, we are offered a moment that brings all of those principles vividly to life—something so powerful it stops us in our tracks.

Recently, during a reflective practice session, one of our practitioners shared an incident from the previous evening. While walking with a young person, they came across a man in acute distress on a motorway bridge, attempting to end his life.

Without hesitation, the practitioner intervened physically to keep the man safe. Alongside her, the young person, who could easily have become overwhelmed by the intensity of the situation, responded with clarity and purpose. Following calm instruction, he contacted emergency services and communicated effectively, ensuring a swift response. Together, they contained an extraordinarily high-risk situation until help arrived.



MY TRIBE

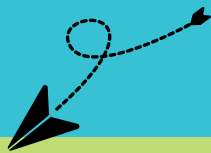


Moments of success in conventional residential services are often fleetingly acknowledged before the work continues. But, in reflective practice the team are encouraged to stay with a feeling. As the conversation unfolded, another memory surfaced, one from almost exactly a year earlier.

At the very beginning of this young person's placement, in a state of profound dysregulation and distress, he had stood on that very same motorway bridge, expressing his own wish to end his life. On that occasion, it was staff who had to intervene physically to bring him to safety.

And here we were, one year later.

The same bridge.
The same young person.
A completely different story.



This time, he was not standing on the edge, he was walking alongside a trusted adult, regulated, connected, and safe. When faced with another human being in crisis, he did not turn away. He did not become overwhelmed. Instead, he stepped into the role that had once been held for him.

He responded exactly as he had been shown.

With clarity.
With courage.
With care.

It is difficult not to be struck by the symbolism of this. A young person who once needed to be held back from the edge now helping to hold someone else safely in the world. A moment that captures, so clearly, the essence of what therapeutic communities can offer.

This is the quiet, powerful work of relationships over time. It is what happens when young people are consistently met with therapeutically informed care, when adults remain present, regulated, and compassionate, even in the most challenging moments. It is what grows when a child experiences not just safety, but belonging.

We do not always get to see the outcomes of our work so clearly. Often, the impact of therapeutic care unfolds slowly, invisibly, over months or years. But sometimes, we are given a moment like this, one that reminds us that change is not only possible, but profound.



Sad news of the Death of Tony Hornsby

We learn of Tony Hornsby's death on 10th January 2026. While a longer piece on Tony's life and work will be shared in the next TCTC Newsletter, I wanted to write a few words here.

Tony will be known to many for his infectious and mischievous personality. I met Tony through the Charterhouse Group back in the late 1990s. He was committed to his work, and very funny – one could imagine how the young people at Glebe would benefit from his commanding and charismatic presence. At the Windsor conference Tony often ran experiential workshops which were enlivening and broke the ice at the start of conference. He ran those events with skill and charm, and staff at Glebe will have benefited immensely from his ability to draw the best of our people at both the individual and group level. I have a feeling more will be said about this, but in the evenings Tony could, and would, regale crowds with his reminiscences and stories, some taller than others.

He was one of those shining personalities which therapeutic communities occasionally throw up, and the TC landscape is the less without him.

Chris Nicholson

For several years now, from late February to mid-March, the Northern tradition of sap harvesting has become a regular event for us as well. Guests and staff take part in this celebratory ritual marking the approaching end of winter, venturing into the park of Villa Plinia—home to one of the Foundation's two Communities—in search of birch trees. This substance is typically extracted before the tree blossoms, by making small incisions in the trunk and inserting straws through which the liquid can flow out. The birch is one of the first trees to awaken from its winter slumber and is also a resilient tree, as it thrives even in harsh soil, starting its growth cycle earlier than many other plants.



Birch sap has numerous properties, among which its powerful purifying, detoxifying, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, and painrelieving effects stand out. It also promotes the elimination of toxins from the body, while providing valuable mineral salts.

'I felt very connected with nature. This experience was so regenerating that it made me reflect on the cycle of nature and of giving and receiving.'



Fondazione
Rosa dei Venti
— ONLUS —

Therapeutic meanings of the act of sap collection: There is much to reflect on regarding the therapeutic meaning of this ancestral gesture. First and foremost, it is a mode of care—dear to the Foundation—in which nature becomes a possible third interlocutor within the relationship between guest and educator, concretely introducing the themes of temporality, process, and waiting. In our view, this challenges adolescents' common belief that everything around us is inexhaustible and therefore always available and ready to use. This confrontation with reality helps young people to re-situate themselves in their fragile adolescence, often marked by a baseline impulsivity—certainly amplified by a consumerist society that pushes us daily toward wastefulness. It also allows, in dialogue with nature, for the reworking of omnipotent tendencies rooted in infantile egocentrism—the idea that “everything is owed to me and possible simply because I want it”.

Tapping sap teaches that the old belief of "everything is owed to me" doesn't hold: birch trees follow the course of nature, which we cannot control.



Another key lesson lies in the waiting: it can take hours to collect enough sap to fill a single bottle. This wait allows one to enter a different experience of time compared to the chaotic, urgent, and fast-paced rhythm that often characterizes life in a therapeutic structure for adolescents. Even the staff, often overwhelmed by emotional emergencies and the acting out of the young people, have the opportunity to reconnect and recentre themselves around the themes of slowness and process—borrowing from nature a different and certainly more respectful way of marking time, one that aligns with the natural rhythms of life.

Guests and staff
Fondazione Rosa dei Venti onlus

Written by:
Dott.sa Marta Ostinelli Director of Therapeutic community Rosa dei Venti
Fondazione Rosa dei Venti onlus

Translated by:
Dott.sa Laura Cereda
Organizational coordinator of Day Center
Fondazione Rosa dei Venti onlus



Miranda, SUN member

"The Garden Within"

There's a garden growing deep inside,
Beyond the storms we often hide.
Where tender roots, though bent and torn,
Still seek the light, still are reborn.

Each tear, a rain that softens ground,
Each breath, a seed where hope is found.
And though some days feel harsh and long,
The quiet heart still hums a song.

Not every bloom will rise with ease,
Some stretch through shadows, cold and freeze.
But still they rise, imperfect, whole.
The living proof of a healing soul.

You are not broken just becoming,
In every stillness, every humming.
A journey slow, but rich and true.
The garden grows because of you.

So be the sun to your own green.
Be kind, be patient, and be seen.
For healing isn't always loud.
It's in each soft "I'm safe now" vowed.

And when you doubt how far you've come,
Look at your roots see what you've done.
You grew through pain, through fear, through strife.
You are the bloom of your own life.

Elle Seline



SUN (Service User Network) is an easy-to-access community-based service for adults experiencing difficulties with complex emotions often associated with personality disorder. These emotions can affect how a person feels, copes with life and manages relationships.

For more information please contact: sun.admin@sabp.nhs.uk



September 2025 was a big milestone for the Sequoia Therapeutic Community, known by us as the TC. It marked 10 years since we opened the doors to this brand-new service, offering hope to the most Emotionally Complex people in our area. So much has changed in that time and the events at the Navigo Annual General Meeting served to demonstrate so many of these changes.

As part of the celebrations of our 10-year anniversary, we were asked as a community to create a seminar for the AGM. We would be on a stage in front of hundreds of people and be live streamed on YouTube. We were allocated 50 minutes, a lot of time to fill! Over the weeks we worked together to decide how we would spend that precious time, and what message we wanted to give.

We wanted to recreate a mini-TC on the stage; we even bought along our comfy chairs we use and laid them out in a horseshoe shape similar to how we sit together in our therapy space. The familiarity of this layout and those chairs were so reassuring when dealing with the stress of this production.

We wanted to celebrate our milestone but also use the opportunity to inform the audience about our service. So, we decided to use a podcast format with all the contributors being welcomed and introduced by our Clinical Lead Tara Foulkes.

So here is the first example of change. 3 of our team had been working at the TC since its foundation, one of them being our Consultant, Dr Wojciech Gierynski, who was central in the instigation and development of the programme, we are lucky enough to still have him with us today. Alison Addison has also been with us since day one, she is the Dynamic Administrator, yes amazing job title! She was the behind-the-scenes person for the AGM, ensuring everything was ready for the big day. Sitting on the front row, that morning, she was like the mother hen willing everyone on. Therapist Vanessa Waite is another of our original team, she is due to retire this year so more change to come. 4 others came later. Tara joined us mid pandemic as a therapist and this year became our Clinical Lead after the retirement of Suzanne Brown the previous Clinical lead and co-founder of the program. About the same time, I joined the team as the first Peer Support Worker having graduated from the program in 2021. Finally, we have recently recruited 2 new trainee therapists, Mental Health Nurses, first Dana Diskin and later Elle Brailey and our tight -knit team is complete, for now.



Tara introduced herself and gave an outline of the workings of a TC, and how she became such a central part of it. A few weeks before she had asked the members to write a few lines each of childhood thoughts and memories, in her speech she tied them together to paint a picture of the enduring pain and suffering and the deep-seated thoughts and beliefs which kept them trapped in their past, unable to move forward. It enabled the audience to empathise with their journey and get a better understanding of the level of distress needing to be addressed but also gave them an appreciation of the level of progress that is possible. It was a beautiful speech, and the audience lapped it up.

Next to speak was Wojciech his talk was all about change. He described how and why our service had come about, and his role in bringing this great idea into fruition. He explained the story behind the name, and how the service had developed into the multi award-winning, accredited service that it is today. It was a fascinating history and the pride he had in this service was clear for all to see. More warm applause ensued.

I was third up, my name is Debra Jones, my goodness what a nerve-wracking experience, to be on stage sharing my story! I described how I ended up in Cleethorpes, how I found the TC and the complete desperate mess I was in when I agreed to give therapy one last go. I lived alone, had no family relationships or friends and had not worked for the past 22 years. I was 52 when I began this incredible journey. I have just celebrated my 60th Birthday this year on holiday with my family. It was a stunning holiday because of the people I was with. Since graduating I have been working as a peer support worker, after the first year based with the Community Mental Health Team,

I moved to become a full part of the team at the TC. I absolutely love my job, to be a part of other people's growth and change is a privilege. When I think of the changes to my life in the last 10 years, and there have been so many, I think the most important one for me is I no longer feel alone in a hostile world, and this has given me the confidence to keep growing those edges to be able to fulfil the potential I had always been missing. My speech was received with enthusiastic applause and many conversations later in the day were started with people I had never spoken to before because of it. I was relieved and proud in equal measure.



The next speaker was another graduate of the program. She is currently training as a mental health nurse and is doing fabulously well. She gave a moving speech outlining her journey and acknowledging her difficult, defensive behaviour at the beginning that made her hard to reach. She described how the TC had helped her and how much the community and staff meant to her and the future she now has. Her words drew a picture of her transformation from desperation to hope, from repeated long ward admissions and no sense that this would ever change, to someone able to see a future and be able to make it work. Not only has her life changed beyond measure she is now determined to pay it forward and be a part of other people's change too. Another round of rapturous applause ensued.

More change was then explained by our next speaker, Dr Holly Ingolby, she is Clinical lead for the new Complex Emotional Needs Service (CEN). She detailed how all the services for this group of people have been brought together, The TC, the DBT team (Dialectical Behavioural Therapy) specialist care co-ordination and support workers all under the same management team and soon to be under one physical roof. It is providing a wrap around, seamless service that ensures all service users get the specialist service that is right for them. It also allows the teams to share their knowledge and best practice, and ensures the service is on the right footing to not only last another ten years but continues to improve its offer to our service users.



Finally, Stuart Harris a Care Co-ordinator for the CEN service spoke, he described his role and its benefits to the service user and to himself. His passion and dedication to his work was clear. It is another change we are undergoing, we used to do all the care co-ordination in house in the TC, but now this role is gradually being centralised within the CEN team to provide skilled professionals who have the expertise and the time to offer this highly valuable service.

I also have to mention the five other members on the stage. All current members of the community, who, although they did not have speaking roles volunteered to join us on stage in support of those who were speaking and to give a better sense of a community. Not a single person who promised to do this failed to turn up despite their nerves. This is another example of change. None of those 5 would have dreamed of doing this a few short months ago. Now they were able to sit with the uncomfortable, a vital skill, so that they can become open to new experiences and more change. They all reported it had been an enriching experience that left them feeling very proud to have been part of this very special 50 minutes. Nor must I forget the other community members who all attended the event on their free day, to support their community again facing their anxiety of being in a strange busy place for the first time.

Then the live streaming was halted as our final contributor stood. She was going to sing us out, but due to copy right rules this part could not be live-streamed. When I say sing us out, it does not do justice to this momentous achievement. Soon to graduate from the program, her goal had been to be able to sing in front of a live audience. Soon after joining the TC, already legally blind, her corneal transplant failed and she was left having to come to terms the loss of hope for any recovery on top of everything else. I remember this lady when she started the group, shaking from head to toe with anxiety and barely able to speak, now here she was in a beautiful dress, standing on stage, mike in hand about to mesmerise the audience. She was only a few bars in when people throughout the hall surged forward to listen and watch this spectacle. 3 songs later and the standing ovation went on and on.

There was not a dry eye in the house. As I write this she is in her last week of therapy and is looking forward to combining a musical career and working as a peer support worker. How much more change can you get?

I hope you enjoyed this report of a very special day for us all. We all achieved something that day and perhaps the greatest achievement was the newly strengthened sense of pride and togetherness of our community.

If you would like to watch all these speeches here is the link to the You Tube recording of the AGM, our section begins at 17mins 30secs. Enjoy!

<https://www.youtube.com/live/jDfsxrL6gls>

Written by Debra Jones. Peer Support Worker

International Group

As a group we have decided that in 2026 we would like to welcome guests to our regular meetings, people we would like to have a dialogue with, exchange ideas, share experiences. We are hoping to connect with people across the world to explore our ways of working, and potentially decrease some of the feeling of isolation that can often be a part of our experience when working in TC-like minded ways.

On 19th of June, we will have the chance to meet with Bob Hinshelwood. Bob Hinshelwood is very well known to us all for his dedication to exploring and promoting the TC ways of working.



Those meetings are dedicated to people interested in TC ideas, that are based in countries other than UK.

For more details and link for meeting, please email Iwona (im@cht.org.uk) or Luca (luca.ming@me.com).

Call For Papers

The 47th Annual International
TCTC Conference
28th – 30th September 2026



'Once there were fields' by David Downes - David Downes Gallery - Manningtree, Essex - <https://www.daviddownes.co.uk/>

Submission Deadline

**13th
May
2026**

Theme

*The Cost and the Value: Therapeutic
Communities and Sustainable
Organisations*

Topics for the paper are as follows:

- ✓ Arts and Culture
- ✓ Histories
- ✓ Adventures
- ✓ Narratives and Voices
- ✓ Costs, value, sustainable organisations

Fees

Early Bird prices until 17th June, 2026

Consortium Member:

Full conference (inc Sunday)	£745 £708
3-day	£595 £556
Day delegate	£99 £94

Non-member:

Full conference (inc Sunday)	£875 £831
3-day	£685 £651
Day delegate	£150 £152

Important Dates

13th May 2026

27th May 2026

17th June 2026

18th September
2026

28th September
2026

Call For Papers
submission
deadline

Acceptance
notification

Early bird
discount ends

Conference
booking deadline

Conference
date

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