



PLANNED ENVIRONMENT THERAPY TRUST

“working for therapeutic environments”

18 March 2013

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Speaking of the Future

The Planned Environment Therapy Trust will be fifty years old in 2016. It is the oldest charity of its kind devoted to therapeutic communities and environments in Britain, and probably in the world. It is almost certainly the only one with a dedicated Archive and Study Centre!

Three years ago, following substantial investment in new conference facilities and expanded archive storage, the Trust embarked on an ambitious programme of activities and development designed to ensure its sustainability, fit-for-purpose, and continuing creativity and productivity over the next fifty years.

Having won a major Heritage Lottery Fund grant in 2010 for the award-winning "Therapeutic Living With Other People's Children" project, which demonstrated the rich potential locked within the Archive and Study Centre's resources, the Trust carried out a root-and-branch examination of its structures and governance, and its approach to funding and finance.

Historically self-funding, the expansion of the Trust's work and the global financial downturn - which destabilised and undermined the previously reliable investments the Trust had depended on - encouraged P.E.T.T. to step into a brave new world of grant applications and of actively sought donations. At the same time, the role of Trustee was separated from that of Executive Director, with the appointment of the Trust's first paid Executive Director in Richard Rollinson; and there was a carefully planned and successful hand-over of responsibility from the longstanding Director, John Cross.

Progress and Achievements

With all of these changes coming together during the first 18 months of the last three years, over the past 18 months the Trust has been using its resources to consolidate, to experiment, and to explore. Among many other firsts:

- An all-new website was born from the bedlam of sites and formats which had gone before;
- PETTATHON, the Trust's first ever online fundraising campaign, was a wonderful success, bringing in over £6,500 from a standing start, generating significant new and well-received content on the website, and building confidence in the team;
- An exciting new relationship was forged with the Mulberry Bush School, through which the

Trust was able to extend the tenure of assistant archivist Matt Naylor - to catalogue past records and to help with exhibitions and displays; and which will enable the Archive to actively respond to future queries from former children and staff while servicing the School's needs for ongoing access to past files;

- Through an additional grant from Richard Crocket's family we were able to hold onto Matt Naylor even longer, adding value to the Trust's work in innumerable ways while allowing him to bring an expanding Crocket Collection under control;
- We hosted a series of Archive Weekends, of course, but with new friends as well as old; and on the basis of those experiences have been able to work far more closely with volunteers throughout the year in what are effectively mini-Archive Weekends;
- We have created a new series of P.E.T.T. seminars, drawing particularly on Executive Director Richard Rollinson's extensive experience and expertise; and breaking new ground in our own thinking about what we can and can not do with the resources we have here;
- Team members Chris Long and Gemma Geldart have taken the lead in discovering and bringing new trainings in art and creative writing to Toddington, paving the way for a more actively event-generating Trust and opening doors on publicity and local networking which have come as a revelation.

Indeed, it has been a year and six months of revelations in these and many other ways, a period which was framed by the Community Archives and Heritage Group's "Most Impactful Archive of the Year" award at the beginning, and the welcome surprise of the equally prestigious "Archive of the Year" award from Your Family History Magazine at the end. We have successfully navigated a series of major transitions, against a difficult world financial background; we have strengthened our organisational foundations, and consolidated gains and achievements of the past decade (and more!). We have prepared the ground; and with the help of friends and the creativity and commitment of our team and community, will continue to build the new model of organisation and engagement which every indication tells us is both right and welcome.

“The State of Play”

When Gemma Geldart and Chris Long joined the Trust in 2010 as members of the "Therapeutic Living With Other People's Children" project team, we had no idea what a find they were. We quickly learned; and as the project neared its end in 2011, 18 months later, the Trustees asked if they would stay a while longer to help us to cement the achievements of the project, and support the Trust in its ongoing transition. At first it was six months. Then it was twelve. Looking closely at the Trust's finances, and what they had helped us to achieve, the Trust then asked if they would stay a full 18 months. They did, setting in train developments which are already bearing fruit. At the same time, when the Trust established the Archive and Study Centre in 1989, it set a ceiling on its financial reserves, sufficient to ensure the long-term security and maintenance of the Archive's holdings, a level below which it could not and would not allow the reserves to fall. With outgoings exceeding incomings, Trustees have seen that ceiling approaching; and during February took the difficult decision, coming to the end of their second 18 months, to let Gemma and Chris go, to halve archivist Craig Fees's hours and to reduce Richard's time commitment. Chris and Gemma have become such a close part of our wider community that it is almost inconceivable that they will no longer be here.

Fortunately, support from the community, some of it directly in response to their imminent leaving, means that both Chris and Gemma will remain part of the life and work of the Trust, Gemma on a one day a month consultancy basis, available for more extended contributions and special

occasions; and Chris helping with the administration and management of a number of events organised by or through the Trust: with the aim of building on the foundations which have already been laid to bring them both (if they wish!) more fully back into the daily work of a uniquely exciting and challenging (in a good way!) charity.

What does that "new building" entail?

- Grant applications, of course, and the major range of projects which follow;
- Recruiting new Trustees;
- A new Members Scheme, which will enable individuals, organisations, and therapeutic communities to actively support and help to guide the work of the Trust, while developing new benefits for members;
- Continuing to forge mutually supportive links with current, active therapeutic communities and other planned environments;
- Continuing to develop income-generating events and trainings for the Trust;
- And continuing to build on the adventure initiated in the "Therapeutic Living With Other People's Children" project, among other things.

Final Reflection

We are almost fifty. We are in a period of new adventures, grounded in thoughtfulness, and continuing to open up the Trust to the creative and challenging involvement of the wider community. The goal? A stronger sector for the care and treatment of children, young people, and adults in need. A healthier Society, and a deeper understanding of what is possible and necessary when things go wrong for people; grounded in the immense experience of the Past, brought together with the unique life of the Present, to produce the powerful, positive changes of direction which we know are possible for the Future. We've seen it - countless times. If you've been a member of a therapeutic community or environment, or know someone who has, you've seen it too. Together we can spread the practice, and the word. Please keep close to us, and join with us in this 'very big adventure'.

With thanks, and all best wishes,



Rich Rollinson
Executive Director