



26th June 2012

Dear Colleague

Launch of the Association of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioners

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all who share an interest in Social & Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) and Horticultural Therapy (HT).

Many discussions and meetings have taken place over the course of the past twenty years in respect of looking at the professional status of STH and HT. Many steering groups and organisations have been formed and have paved the way for much thought and consideration.

In May 2009, two Coventry Professional Development Diploma Social & Therapeutic Horticulture graduates arranged a meeting in Milton Keynes which aimed to take the debate a stage further. At that meeting professionals from varied backgrounds and diverse locations listened to inspiring speakers and discussed where they wanted the profession to be heading. Ideas that arose from the meeting echoed those of conferences held in 1997 and 1999 jointly between Horticulture for All and Thrive. Practitioners at these previous meetings called for regional practitioner networks, a national project database, guidelines for good practice and a more developed research culture.

Following this a web based survey conducted in 2006-7 (Fieldhouse and Sempik 2007), reported that the majority of respondents (92%) wanted a representative national body and registration of practitioners / projects and over half (61%) a protected job title. Attendees of the meeting in 2009 called for a register of individual practitioners. This would clearly put more of an emphasis and focus on the individual professional with individual responsibilities and accountability.

From May 2009 to the present day a steering committee has met regularly in order to discuss the way forward, and meetings have been held with parties that have an interest in the development of STH and HT as a profession, including the Health Professions Council.

The Association of Social & Therapeutic Horticulture Practitioners now exists as an unincorporated association and has the following aims;

1. To develop and promote the profession.
2. To be the representative body for Horticultural Therapists and practitioners of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
3. To promote, maintain and improve the theory, practice and benefits of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture.
4. To forge links with practitioners and similar organisations at home and abroad (We are pleased to report that we now have links both at home and abroad with the aim of mutual benefit and cooperation).

We aim to set out initial proposals at our conference on 2nd November 2012 at Pershore College (Part of Warwickshire College), Worcestershire. Thereafter the future of the Association will be very much up to members to decide how best we can help to promote the profession and offer the right kind of support to STH practitioners.

Together we can grow

Please reply to:

Theresa Wedderburn, Chair of Trustees - ASTHP, c/o Greenshoots, Manor Farm, Peppard Common, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire. RG9 5LB

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our website (www.asthp.org.uk) and would encourage you to consider joining us (only £10 per year). Initially we will be concentrating on supporting our fellow practitioners through local and then functional networks. Our longer term aim is the development of a voluntary profession register, work on which has already started.

STH clearly has a positive role to play in the future of modern health and social care, as such we firmly believe that individual practitioners should be professionally recognised for the wonderful contribution that we all make to the health and wellbeing of the people whose needs we serve.

Yours sincerely on behalf of all trustees,

Thérésa Wedderburn

DipSTH DipHORT

Chair of Trustees – ASTHP

Reference:

Fieldhouse J, Sempik J (2007) 'Gardening Without Borders': Reflections on the Results of a Survey of Practitioners of an 'Unstructured' Profession. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 70 (10), 449-453.

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