

Gardening4Health

Newsletter Winter 2026

The first Gardening4health Newsletter for a while, as we've been taking something of a breath, but loads of news and content here from around the world of Horticultural Therapy.



Maggie Haynes BEM



We're absolutely delighted to report that [Tuppenny Barn](#) Founder, and Gardening4Health Trustee Maggie Haynes has been awarded the British Empire Medal in the 2026 New Year's Honours Awards.

Richly deserved recognition of her amazing work over so many years for the Community and the Environment.

Congratulations Maggie – from all of us at Gardening4Health!

Website

We're delighted to report that our new revamped website goes live this week. It's represented loads of work over many months – and we think it looks fab and hopefully works well! Special thanks go to the legend that is Anne Wagstaff, and to Tom, Dylan and Rebecca at Peekaboo for all their hard work and help putting everything together.



For the first time we're also publishing our "Tool Kit". So many times have we heard of Gardens and charities "reinventing the wheel" on their own journeys and making mistakes that others could have warned them against. This is partly our attempt at sharing that knowledge so that everyone can benefit. So, we decided to gather as much of this

information as we can in one place - to enable sharing of wisdom from the whole landscape of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture and thus create a toolkit for people to learn from.

Have an [explore](#) and see what you think.

Therapeutic Gardening Tours

After 20 years in the military charity sector where she pioneered Horticultural Therapy (HT) as a rehab intervention for injured serving personnel, Gardening4Health Trustee Anna Baker Cresswell has recently started a new business to promote HT to healthcare professionals around the world via Therapeutic Garden Tours.

Inherently we all know that gardening is good for you, but HT can be applied to many different client groups and the aim of the Tours is to visit different settings both private and public, to see HT in action for spinal injury patients, military rehab, secure settings, children with behavioural challenges, dementia and much more.

Anna BC is joining Sandra Schwarz online for an online mini conference from Root In Nature on 7th March when Anna will be talking about the Therapeutic Garden Tours last autumn.

For more information about future tours, and how you can widen your HT networks and improve your CPD (or even just enjoy sharing HT with others!), please contact

anna@therapeuticgardentours.com



News from the UK Association of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture

The UK ASTH has now finalised the [Practitioner Competencies](#).

These competencies have been created by a working group of practitioners, alongside Trellis and Thrive, and outline the abilities that Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (STH) Practitioners need in order to fulfil their responsibilities safely and effectively, in line with the UK Association for Social and Therapeutic Horticulture (ASTH) Practice Standards and Code of Ethics.

Find more information about the UK ASTH [here](#).

Trellis Annual Conference 13th March 2026

Booking is now open for the Trellis Conference - Scotland's leading event for professionals working in therapeutic horticulture. Held annually, at The Bield, Blackruthven, Perth, it brings together over 100 practitioners, researchers, and advocates from across the UK to share knowledge, explore best practice, and strengthen connections across the sector.

What the Conference Offers

- Professional input from keynote speakers, workshop leaders, and delegates, covering topics from horticulture techniques to therapeutic practices.
- Networking opportunities with a diverse community of over 100 attendees, fostering collaboration peer support and fresh perspectives.
- Project showcases that highlight innovation, impact and the diverse ways gardening supports health and wellbeing.
- Training workshops tailored to practical and therapeutic gardening themes, offering hands-on learning and skill-building.



<https://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/trellis-therapeutic-horticulture-conference-2026>

The view from the hospital: Can gardens heal patients? 1st April 2025

The Apple House at Serge Hill will host a panel to discuss how can plants and gardens help transform healthcare.

On April 1, from 5.30–7.30pm, respected practitioners from the worlds of gardening, design and medicine. Broadcaster and gardener Rachel de Thame, psychiatrist and author Dr

Sue Stuart-Smith, landscape designer Jinny Blom, Darrell Gale Director of Public Health for East Sussex and gardens consultant Chris Young will explore the growing evidence that nature plays a powerful role in healing.



Many hospitals remain harsh, nature-poor environments, in spite of plentiful evidence of benefit for patients when they come into contact with nature.

Money raised at the event will go towards plans to redevelop the hospital garden at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre in Hertfordshire, spearheaded by Matthew Biggs, author and panellist on BBC Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time.

Full details, registration and tickets can be found [here](#).



A Safe Green Space: The Landscape of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture.

Also at Serge Hill later this month is the next event in the Safe Green Space series: a one-day symposium which explores the current and future landscapes of social therapeutic

horticulture and social prescribing hosted by the Serge Hill Project in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Horticulture's STH Group.

The day brings together an inspiring group of leading names from across the industry to examine the current landscape of social and therapeutic horticulture and to map its future; from accreditation to funding, from freelance practitioners to community projects, from pay to best practice.

Join us to hear from a distinguished group of experts across panel discussions, case studies and presentations:

- Molly Aldham (Natural Environment, National Lead, National Academy for Social Prescribing)
- Anna Baker Creswell (Trustee, Gardening4Health)
- Helen Bridle (Partnerships Manager, Defence Gardens Scheme)
- Dr Richard Claxton (CEO, National Garden Scheme)
- Sarah Galvin (Head of National Community Programmes, RHS)
- Linda Petrons (Director of Fundraising and Communications, Greenfingers)
- Keely Siddiqui Charlick (CEO Sunnyside Rural Trust)
- Dr Honey Smith (Director Greener Practice)
- Dr Sue Stuart-Smith (Co-Founder, The Serge Hill Project)
- Ben Thomas (CEO Thrive)
- Madeleine Thomas (STH practitioner)
- Lucy Thorpe (Regional Coordinator for London, Defence Gardens Scheme)

This event is unmissable for social therapeutic horticulture practitioners, social prescribers, gardeners, occupational therapists, GPs, community projects, charities, not-for-profits and anyone with an interest in the power and potential of social therapeutic horticulture.

Currently Sold out but there is a [waiting list](#).

Trellis Horticultural Therapy Course

Trellis are running a series of half-day, live, online sessions. They are suitable for anyone interested in, or already involved in, providing nature connection and gardening activity to support wellbeing. The course



delivers foundation and intermediate levels of knowledge for professionals and volunteers working in settings such as:

- Health e.g. nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, link workers with an interest in Green Health
- Care e.g. managers, care staff, activity co-ordinators
- Education e.g. teachers, classroom assistants, those specialising in additional and Special Educational Needs support
- Community and Specialist support groups e.g. mental health, dementia, homelessness, cancer support, welfare support

More information can be found [here](#).

Research Opportunity

This has been sent from our old friend Carly Wood – at the University of Essex – Please help contribute if you can:

“We are undertaking a study to determine the scale of provision of horticultural interventions across the UK. Individuals aged 18years+ representing an organisation or service who deliver interventions centred around horticultural activity for those experiencing ill-health, disability or disadvantage and support attendees in working towards set outcomes or objectives are invited to complete an online survey.



The survey consists of three sections and should take no more than 15minutes to complete.

Section one asks about the organisation or service being represented, the types of programmes delivered, how long these have been delivered for and in what region of UK. It also asks about the staff and volunteers employed to deliver the interventions.

Section two asks a series of questions about who the interventions are delivered for, where they are delivered, where individuals attending the programmes are referred from and how the interventions are funded.

The final section explores the specific characteristics of the interventions delivered, including the length, frequency and duration of sessions, how they are evaluated and the barriers to upscaling.

We would like to invite you to take part in the study by visiting the following link https://essex.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eA2EbEVv88zkSvs.

The information provided will help to support the growth of the sector and future commissioning. We also invite you to share this email and the survey link with your colleagues and contacts in the field.”

National Lottery Community Fund: New Climate Action Fund strand on strengthening food systems

Food sits at the heart of our health, our communities and our environment. But too often, food insecurity, environmental damage and inequality are tackled separately. The National Lottery Community Fund's Climate Action Fund strand on food is looking for ambitious, long-term



projects that strengthen food systems, tackle the root causes of food insecurity and work with nature to create lasting change. Now looking for partnerships and organisations that already have the skills, relationships and infrastructure to work at scale to lead transition to food systems that are fairer, more resilient and better for people, climate and nature.

Grant minimum of £2.5m over 3 years

- Available UK wide
- Focused on long term, systems level change

Find out more and apply here: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/funding-programmes/climate-action-fund-food-systems> or email climateactionfund@tnlcommunityfund.org.uk

We were invited to attend the 7th International Symposium run by Jardin Santé in Paris in November – but sadly were unable to get away from work!

Entitled “Gardens, health and mediation through plants: 20 years already! What’s next?” it looked to be an interesting two days of forums and networking – and we’ll be looking out for next Autumn’s event. [Click here](#) for a link to their website.



The National Garden Scheme

If you have a project that needs funds – it’s worth thinking about applying for one from The National Garden Scheme

Gardens and health beneficiaries

The charities funded as part of the National Garden Scheme’s Gardens and Health programme create gardens with health benefits and promote gardens and gardening as therapy. The current beneficiaries are: Maggie’s, Horatio’s Garden, The Army Benevolent Fund, and The Country Trust.



Gardens and Health grants applications are reviewed annually in September. An application must be for a garden with a clear health and/or wellbeing purpose, or from a charity to develop a programme of gardening therapy. Eligibility must be established before an application can be made; all enquiries should be sent by email to the Chief Executive (richard@ngs.org.uk).

Community garden grants

The National Garden Scheme also funds community garden projects that help support regeneration, social cohesion and the health and wellbeing of communities. Grants are for a maximum of £5,000 and are awarded through an application process that is open annually for a set period of weeks in October and November.

Application process for Community Garden Grants: For details click [here](#)