

## **WPF Therapy appoints a new Chair**

WPF Therapy is delighted to announce the appointment of Steve Davidson as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Steve will take over as the Chair of Trustees from 11 September and replace Carol Rue who is retiring after six years.

WPF will be recruiting for new trustees later this year to ensure the Board of Trustees is operating with the right skills and diversity of expertise.

### **Outgoing Chair, Carol Rue writes:**

This month I am stepping down as Chair of WPF Therapy and I want to leave some parting thoughts with you all.

During the six years of my tenure there have been enormous changes and WPF Therapy's culture has developed in new and positive directions. I have thoroughly enjoyed my role and am very grateful for the support I have received from my fellow Trustees, especially during the many challenges the organisation has faced – floods, terrorist attacks and a pandemic to name but a few!!

One of the most important tasks for a Chair is the recruitment and positive working relationship with the CEO and I have been delighted to see my decision to recruit Sam validated. Under her leadership WPF has moved from being a separated, anxious organisation to one that is collaborative and adaptive.

A key role for Trustees is that of constructive challenge – being the so-called 'critical friend' - and the healthy tension between Sam and her leadership team and the Board of Trustees has delivered an organisation that is resilient and innovative. WPF Therapy is now fleet of foot and adaptable to even the most extreme circumstances and this will be a major benefit as we continue to demonstrate and build our leadership in the field of psychodynamic therapy and training.

Immediately the lockdown began the team at WPF set about transferring all of our services online and this has worked amazingly well and enabled us to continue training therapists and providing therapy to our clients. Almost everyone has adapted really well to this new way of working. We have been able to start to gather evidence to enable us to assess the efficacy of delivering psychodynamic therapy remotely – looking at how this impacts issues like transference. So the lockdown has gifted us an opportunity to closely monitor and review a range of considerations in delivering therapy remotely and to explore further development of the psychodynamic model for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will conduct formal and ethical research into this and only proceed in the longer term if the case for online delivery is proven. If it were, that would enable us to broaden our reach, in line with our mission, and deliver services to more people across the UK and even beyond.

Additionally, in support of WPF Therapy's mission to increase the availability of therapy, the Board recently agreed to extend our community clinic and to moderate our pricing structure to make it easier for more people to be able to afford to access therapy. This will be even more important as society emerges from, and adapts to, a new world with the challenges brought about by the pandemic. Clearly, we will need to continue to balance availability of these discounted rates with our obligation to maintain the financial health of the charity and so access to these favourable rates will be carefully targeted to those most in need.

When Bill Kyle started WPF way back in 1969 he quickly recognised that there was a shortage of therapists and set about training more. We find ourselves in the same situation today. Through existential challenges in society, and for individuals, and an increasing acceptance of talking therapies as a meaningful and acceptable way to help people deal with issues in their lives, we still have that shortfall. During the pandemic we have moved all of our training online and we will continue to develop our approach including testing a blended approach. If successful, this would also allow us to train more therapists so helping to meet that ongoing shortfall between supply and demand.

I joined WPF Therapy six years because of my commitment to personal development and mental well-being and to offer my leadership skills to an organisation that was a leader in its field but was also facing considerable challenges. Over the years a few members of the WPF Therapy community have asked for more clarification of what the Board actually does! So, as I move on, I thought a few words about that might be of interest.

In my role as Chair my key responsibility is to ensure effective governance, which is fit for purpose and adaptable to changing circumstances. So what have I done to address this? Well quite a number of things as it turns out!

Firstly, encouraging and supporting Sam in the development of a clear strategy for the organisation, which has five clear stages and is regularly reviewed by the Board to ensure we remain on track.

Secondly, widening engagement between the Trustees and the organisation through delegation and recruitment of staff members to our Sub Committees and by the Trustees leading the focus groups with staff to and define our values and develop the behavioural statements that support these.

Thirdly, encouraging regular contact between Trustees and staff and trainees by attendance at Staff Development days and graduation events.

Fourthly, encouraging WPF Therapy to adopt the new Charity Governance Code, which lays out best practice for charities, and leading development of our governance in line with its recommendations.

Fifthly, instituting a performance and personal development framework for Trustees and ensuring we have an effective skills matrix against which we recruit new

Trustees in order to ensure the Board has the skills and expertise to lead the organisation.

Finally, keeping a close watch on WPF Therapy's financial health and ensuring income and costs are in line with the organisation's longer-term sustainability.

Each of these actions has been important in laying down a firm foundation for WPF Therapy's future.

Following the pandemic and the challenges that has presented I felt it critical to ensure I left the organisation in safe hands. In times of major change continuity of leadership is key and I am delighted that Steve Davidson has agreed to take over from me as Chair of the Board. The Board of Trustees unanimously voted him into his new position. Many of you will have met Steve at various events over the last few years and know that he is passionate about WPF Therapy and the services it offers. His background in managing psychological therapy services in the NHS and his experience as a Trustee at WPF Therapy will be invaluable in maintaining the momentum the organisation now has. I am confident that I am indeed leaving WPF Therapy in safe hands!

People have also asked me so what will you do now? Well I will be spending my time studying for a post graduate diploma in philosophy at Birkbeck, playing golf and generally trying to keep fit as well as spending time with friends and family and hopefully returning to my love of the arts and travel once circumstances allow.

Of course, I will also be looking out for news of WPF Therapy as the organisation continues to grow and flourish in our new world.

Wishing you all the very best of luck for a successful and healthy future.  
Carol Rue

### **Introduction from Chair Elect: Steve Davidson**

Dear WPF colleagues,

I am delighted to be moving into the role of Chair of WPF Therapy and hope over the next weeks and months to be able to get to know more of you. I want to thank Carol as she steps down as Chair, for her commitment to us over the last six years and for leading us so well.

I have been a Trustee for the last four years and have seen you tackle a range of issues to stabilise the organisation and to keep WPF Therapy as a leader in the field. Your response to the recent Covid-19 challenges has been truly impressive – I hope we can learn and build on these experiences.

I have worked in mental health and psychotherapy for the whole of my career and have been involved in the various challenges that have affected provision. What is clear to me is that psychotherapy and holding an interest in the dynamics of our

lives, is incredibly important – and will become ever more so as we enter this new era.

As Chair, I will lead the Board and work closely with Sam in the challenges ahead. These will become clearer over the next few months, but straight away will require us to articulate the effects on the therapeutic relationship of periods of virtual working, and for us to be confident in demonstrating its effect on quality and outcomes.

The psychotherapy 'market' has been shifting for some while – and over the next year we will need to be proactive in ensuring that we attract trainees and therapy clients and in making sure that our profile as a quality provider continues. We have already been focusing on the role of social media platforms, which will need to increase at pace.

In amongst all this activity, we will need to keep hold of our vision of making psychotherapy available to a wider group of people. I am particularly committed to this aim.

A bit about me – I originally trained as a nurse – then as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist at the Institute of Psychotherapy and Social studies. My recent career was at The South London and Maudsley Trust as a service director. I have a doctorate in organisation change, which I hope will be useful to us! I left the NHS five years ago to train as an Anglican Priest – and now work part time as a Curate in a busy Church in Kennington South London.

I truly believe that organisations thrive when people talk with each other – So please contact me if you'd like to talk

Best Wishes,  
Steve