

Together Henry Hawkins Lectures

Together for Mental Wellbeing is excited to announce that in September 2023 we will be hosting a thought provoking event focussed on mental health called the Together **Henry Hawkins Lecture**.

We intend to celebrate the legacy of our founder Henry Hawkins and promote what people tell us is important to their mental health and wellbeing through instigating an annual programme of lectures of high profile speakers, from the world of arts, culture, healthcare and academia. These lectures will be entitled the Together Henry Hawkins lectures.

The lectures will commemorate the pioneering work of the Reverend Henry Hawkins who founded our charity in 1879 as the first community mental health provider in the country. Hawkins' vision in creating Together was to provide housing, work and emotional support for people discharged from Victorian asylums, to enable them to successfully resume 'life's ordinary associations'. Now 144 years on, Together still supports people living with mental distress through a range of high-quality services, including advocacy, community support, residential accommodation and criminal justice, all of which are underpinned by our core principle of service user leadership.

In May 2020, at the start of the Covid pandemic, Together for Mental Wellbeing received an incredibly generous donation from the artist Antony Gormley following the sale of a piece of his work entitled Together (2020). The piece, depicting an image of unity and togetherness at a time when everyone was experiencing such unexpected isolation, was a timely act of generosity. Receiving the donation lifted the spirits of the charity and re-energised our efforts to build new communities of support and hope both within the organisation and for the people we work alongside.

As Antony Gormley himself eloquently stated in 2020, 'Never before has the collective body of humankind been so conscious of its collective wellbeing.'

Two years later, day to day life continues to be a struggle for many people living with mental distress, but the legacy of Henry Hawkins lives on at Together where we work to seek social justice and inclusion for vulnerable people to live the lives they choose.

Together continues to innovate and these lectures, and the debate they generate, will help all of us to truly value and respect people's experiences of mental distress. Our aim is to continue to develop creative and inspiring ways of supporting people and for their voices to be heard in determining their own futures. We intend to use part of Antony Gormley's donation to fund these annual lectures. The first one will be in September 2023, the month of Henry Hawkins' birth. Acknowledging the source of the donation, the first lecture will focus on the subject of the Arts and mental health and the importance and positive impact that art in all its forms can play in the lives of people living with mental distress.

We are looking for high profile speakers from the world of the Arts and academia to speak at the first lecture and provide context for the place of art in people's journeys towards better wellbeing.

If you are interested in speaking or attending, please contact David Graham, Director of Business Development at David-Graham@together-uk.org

