

NEWSLETTER

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A FESTIVE MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE: THE GIFT OF JOY

By Paul Hackwood - Toc H Chief Executive

Christmas is a good moment to slow down and reflect on joy. Not the kind that comes from cheerfulness and seasonal sparkle, but the deeper joy that grows when people feel connected, supported, and part of something bigger than themselves.

Many of us experienced that during our recent visit to the House of Lords.

What made it meaningful was not the grandeur of the setting. What really mattered was the time spent together ; sharing stories, speaking honestly, and discovering just how much we have in common.

Despite working in different places and under different pressures, the conversations felt familiar.

We recognised the same hopes, the same challenges, and the same desire to help our communities thrive.

There was real joy in that sense of belonging, and in knowing we are part of a wider Toc H family.

Joy is closely linked to solidarity.

It doesn't come from ignoring difficulties or pretending everything is fine. It comes from choosing to stand alongside one another, listening well, and making space for every voice to be heard. We see it when dignity is upheld and when hope starts to grow again in communities facing real hardship. At Christmas, we are reminded that joy is not a luxury — it is a gift. The story at the heart of this season speaks of light in dark times and of God choosing to be present in ordinary, often overlooked places.

That same joy lives on whenever we work for the good of others, support our neighbours to feel less isolated, and help struggling communities find hope and belonging.

Thank you for everything you have contributed this year. Wishing you a peaceful Christmas, and a year ahead filled with hope and shared joy.



Paul Hackwood

TOC H AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS

On 19th November, Toc H was honoured to host a special reception at the House of Lords, generously hosted by Baroness Eaton DBE.

The event brought together people from our projects across the UK, creating a rare opportunity to connect, share experiences and celebrate the impact of Toc H's work nationally.

Guests heard inspiring speeches from our Chief Executive Paul Hackwood, Jonathan Hughes (Chair of the Eveswell Management Committee), Rev Justin Groves from the Pill Trust, and Toc H trustee Rev Tracy Charnock from our project in Blackpool's South Shore.

Each speaker reflected on the strength of our communities, the importance of hope, and the renewed energy across our projects.



EVESWELL RENOVATION UPDATE

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Renovation work at Toc H's Eveswell Community Centre in Newport is officially underway, marking an exciting new chapter for the Centre and everyone involved.

The early stages of the refurbishment have been progressing well, and there is a real sense of momentum as the building begins to take shape.

Staff, trustees, and members of the local community have all played a part in getting the project moving, from clearing spaces and painting to sharing ideas about how the renewed Centre can better serve local families.

It's been incredible to see so many people contributing in different ways- an example of what is possible when communities work together for good.

The project is on track to be completed in line with our projected timescales and we look forward to welcoming visitors to the Centre in the New Year, who will be able to access a refreshed programme of groups, activities and support.



Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU

Funded by
UK Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Thank you to the Community Ownership Fund and the
Community Facilities Programme for making this project
possible.**

IN MEMORY OF BILL BAINS

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On the 11 November 2025, Bill Bains died peacefully at home. He was a long-term member of Toc H, and for many years part of our staff team in the north.

In the mid-sixties Bill was a member of Sunderland branch, and worked in the day for British Railways delivering parcels. Part of his work included delivering wheelchairs and other disability aids to people in Washington New Town, County Durham. It was apparent to Bill that little was known of the disabled people in this fledgling community, not even their whereabouts.

So, Bill, who had previously helped found the Sunderland Society for the Disabled, sought out representatives of local charities willing to help meet the needs of the disabled people in the town. From these initial meetings emerged the ground-breaking Washington Play Scheme.

Then in December 1967, Bill was made redundant from his driving job. Soon after he was called in to see the manager of the local Labour Exchange. Although Bill didn't know him, the man had a disabled wife and knew of Bill through his work in the field. He suggested Bill - who had left school at 14 - train to be a Social Worker.

In 1972 Bill joined the Toc H staff in the Northern Region, and would remain on staff for the next twenty-two years, retiring in 1994.

His interests and achievements are almost too widespread to list but we can mention Colsterdale, Borstal lads, Youth Action Groups, and CAMEOS, to name just a few projects he was involved with.

Even after he stepped down, Bill continued to keep an interest in the work of Toc H and was an active member of our Facebook group.

Bill leaves behind a legacy of compassion, action, and dedication to helping those in need. He will be remembered with great respect and gratitude across the Toc H family.

A NEW TOC H HUB IN SOMERTON, NEWPORT

Toc H is excited to be partnering with the Trustees of the RASCAL Hope Centre in Somerton, Newport, as we work together to bring new life to a much-needed community space.

The Centre has been in decline for over a decade and now sits largely empty, neglected, and in significant disrepair. Despite this, it remains an important local landmark with huge potential to once again support families and residents across the area.

We are currently exploring capital funding opportunities to address the most urgent issues including major roof repairs and identifying revenue funding to begin new family and community work.

The goal is to transform the Centre into a welcoming Toc H hub offering support for vulnerable families in crisis, alongside a programme of activities and services shaped around local needs.

Watch this space for further updates.



This partnership marks an exciting step forward for Toc H in Newport.

It will enable us to reach new groups of people in need, rebuild a declining community resource, and demonstrates our growing positive reputation amongst communities and stakeholders across Newport.



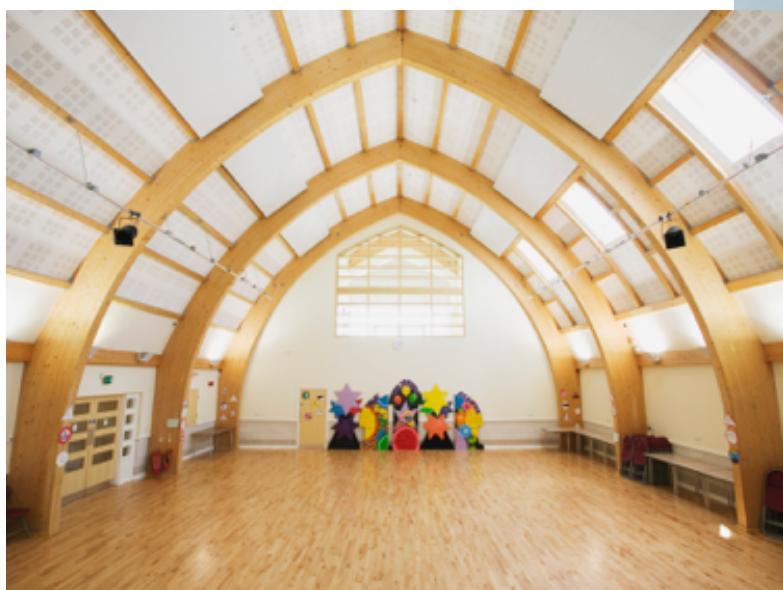
NEW PROJECTS IN NORTH ORMESBY, MIDDLESBROUGH

Toc H is beginning an exciting new chapter of work at the Trinity Centre in North Ormesby, Middlesbrough. We are partnering with local stakeholders to explore how the Centre can become a vibrant hub for arts, creativity and wellbeing activities, particularly for communities who have limited access to cultural opportunities.

North Ormesby is among the most deprived areas in England. The ward is ranked in the top 1% most deprived nationally under the latest measures of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Developing creative programmes here will offer residents new ways to connect, build confidence and express themselves, while helping to address some of the economic disadvantage and social isolation experienced in the community.

Our vision for Trinity will use creativity as a tool for empowerment, inclusion and positive mental health. Over the coming months, we will be working closely with local partners to shape activities that respond directly to community needs.



CONTACT TOC H



Visit our website at: www.toch-uk.org.uk



Email us at: info@toch.org.uk



Call us on: 0208 057 4200



Connect with us: www.facebook.com/TocH.International

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Date for your diary:

Toc H AGM 2026- 15th October 13:30. Venue TBC

Please contact info@toch.org.uk if you would like to attend

HOW YOU CAN DONATE

Donating to Toc H has never been easier:

- To set up a regular gift, or offer a one-off donation, please visit our website: <https://www.toch-uk.org.uk/get-involved>
- Raise FREE donations for Toc H when you shop online using Easyfundraising. Find us at: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/toc-h/
- **If you wish to remember Toc H in your will - Please call our CEO Paul Hackwood on 0208 057 4200**

TOC H MEMBERSHIP



Our members commit themselves to an associational life, encouraging participation, friendship and engagement in local communities.

Membership is **FREE** and supports us all to make our neighbourhoods better places to live and flourish.

We offer various simple ways to become a member:

- Sign up online on www.toch-uk.org.uk,
- Contact us on 020 8057 4200 for a membership form
- Scan the QR code on the left and complete our short membership form