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| **Newbiggin Arts Centre**  **(formerly Little Gem Art & Crafts Gallery)**  **Newsletter Number  8 – October 2020**  **ANOTHER BUMPER EDITION WITH FEEDBACK FROM LAST WEEK’S COMMITTEE MEETING AND WHERE WE ARE WITH RE-OPENING**  **LOTS TO ABSORB, SO PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**  Sorry that the newsletter is a bit later this month; but things have been rather hectic lately!, or had you not noticed the changes at Gibson Street?  I hope that you are all still well, keeping safe and still observing all the Government Guidelines.  **Little Gem Committee Meeting**  At last week’s committee meeting, we welcomed the new (and returning) committee members Valerie Hearn, Heather Peel, Fiona Rowley and Keith Robson (he’s the one who has been here before!).  Due to the COVID restrictions, Sue Nicholson could not attend, so her committee membership will be held in abeyance until she can join in again.  Likewise with Fiona, but she has agreed to be an active ‘virtual member’ until she can attend in person.  If I can find a camera with a strong enough lens, I will take a photo of them all so that you can recognise those who you don’t already know!  I might even put a ‘rogues gallery’ on the website!!  We then voted and elected Val, Heather, Fiona and Keith as Trustees of the Charity.  I will be processing their details with the Charity Commission over the next few days.  **Re-naming**  In response to many people who highlighted the lack of provenance of the name Little Gem and to reflect our new image, vocation and scope, we have now adopted the new name: **NEWBIGGIN ARTS CENTRE**, or NAC.   This is not TOO big a jump, as the facility at Gibson Street was also identified as ‘Newbiggin Art Centre’.  The inclusion of the ‘s’ highlights a broader scope which we may be addressing in the future.  We feel that the new name is much more appropriate, as it reflects the Newbiggin community which we aim to serve; addresses all arts, not just painting and craftwork; and is more than just a gallery – it is a community centre which focuses on all the Arts, providing facilities and services to match the needs of our community.  I hope you will embrace the new name (and excuse the senile old me, who occasionally lapses into calling it ‘the Gallery’)  To match this new name I have launched a new website [**www.newbigginartscentre.org**](http://www.newbigginartscentre.org) which replaces the old website (but, if anyone goes to the old website [www.littlegemnewbiggin.org](http://www.littlegemnewbiggin.org) they will be re-directed to the new website).  Additionally, Val and Sue (our newly elected communications officers) will be setting up new Facebook account(s) reflecting the new name and providing key information to the community who use social media.  They will also be looking at Twitter and other innovative ways to communicate.  While luddites like me will continue using the website and email!  We want to get our message out to the full community around Newbiggin, so please let us have any suggestions which you may have of alternative ways to get the message out and to let you know the latest news from NAC.  Additionally, tell all your friends and relatives, share our posts from Facebook and re-Tweet our messages as wide as you can.  **Re-opening**  Thanks to the thorough deep clean and the total refurbishment of Gibson Street, including re-fit toilet, shed, tiled kitchen and new storage areas, we were in a position to open up fully for our COVID workshops on schedule on 15th September – AND with the back rooms open to artists too.  We have now had three successful weeks of workshops (and opening of the shop & gallery while we are there).  My personal thanks to all who helped Sue and I with all the cleaning and moving.  Your assistance was greatly appreciated!  As was the donation of the floor covering for the toilet from Newbiggin Carpet Centre.  **Communications**  To take advantage of our new website [**www.newbigginartscentre.org**](http://www.newbigginartscentre.org) I now have a new email address [**steve@newbigginartscentre.org**](mailto:steve@newbigginartscentre.org) as well as a NAC mobile phone 077 66 856 365.  We hope to use these two for all future communications.  So, you should have received this newsletter from my new email address.  If you need to contact me, or the NAC, please use this email or this phone number.  Additionally, we have ‘tethered’ the new phone to our new laptop.  This means that we can access the internet from the laptop using the mobile phone.  Additionally, we can use both devices on the office printer and the super-duper professional artist-quality printer (more on this later) to provide lots of useful services to you when you are at the NAC for a class or workshop.  **Sell your paintings on the NAC website**  It is my intention to make your artwork available to a much wider audience; for sale if you wish.  That is why I am developing the web page [**https://newbigginartscentre.org/portfolios/**](https://newbigginartscentre.org/portfolios/)   From this page, which will highlight a sample of work from each contributor, there will be links to your own personal webpage, on which will be displayed all the paintings which you would like to show and a price for which you would be prepared to part with them.  Eventually, I may be able to implement an automatic paying system.  But, for now, we will stick with a manual interface.  If you are interested, please send (or re-send, if you had already sent them for the lockdown exhibitions) me a photo or scan of your artwork together with the following information:  artist name; painting title; medium (oil, acrylic, watercolours, etc.); size; whether the work is mounted, framed or unframed; and selling price (or NFS).  You can also add a bit about the painting.  For ideas of a similar platform, please see <https://www.artfinder.com/> (note, NAC has no relationship with Artfinder; their website is just offered for reference!)  Note, if you can’t manage to produce your own electronic copy of your painting, let me borrow the original and I can either scan it on my own new personal A3 scanner/printer, or photograph it if it is larger than A3 – all part of the service!  **COVID Workshops**  We started our ‘rule of six’ workshops on 15th September.  After deep debate, we agreed that the latest local lockdown restrictions do not affect us.  The workshops will continue as before.  As a ‘social club’, we follow all the requirements of a pub, or other hospitality establishment – such as social distancing; wearing of masks; sanitising and cleaning after use; as well as a comprehensive track and trace record; not to mention the QR code for those ‘youngsters’ with the NHS COVID app on their smart phone!  We go even further by measuring the temperature of everyone who visits the Centre and get all members to sign a COVID declaration and waiver prior to participation in a workshop.  Your safety is paramount and I don’t think we can do anything more to make your participation in our activities risk-free.  However, if you have any additional suggestions, I am all ears.  To date, we have been running four painting workshops; oils on Tuesday morning; a mix of watercolours and acrylics on Wednesday morning; acrylics on Thursday morning and watercolours on Thursday afternoon.  Additionally, the Craft Club meets on a Wednesday afternoon and the East Coast Art Club re-started last week in their normal Wednesday evening slot.  We hope to arrange more sessions.  In particular, Keith would like to run a select oils or drawing session on a Friday morning.  Please let me know if you would like to participate in this, or any additional sessions (perhaps even in the evenings) - and let me know what you would like to do and when.  We will do our best to match your needs with opening times to suit.  **Little Gem Shop**  The shop is now in the front room.  And, doesn’t it look much better; more accessible and attractive to the passers-by?  A special thanks to Val for sorting it all out!  Its success is demonstrated by the increased sales over the past few weeks – and despite the fact that, for now, we are only open when we have workshops running!  We already have a couple of volunteers to supervise the shop and gallery at times other than when there are workshops running.  The plan is that we would have two volunteers looking after the shop at any one time and would have a rota which would only need each volunteer to be available, say, one session in each month.  However, if this plan is to work, we *desperately* need more volunteers to join the rota.  Please let me know if you can spare a few hours every month to help out.  Finally, I have started to re-stock the shop, especially with paints, canvasses, paper and other consumables.  But, if there is anything which you need specifically, or which you think would be good to have on sale, please let me know.  **Exhibition Sub-Committee**  Keith is now heading an exhibition sub-committee which is, initially, sorting out the pictures which will be hung in the Centre.  Eventually, he will also manage specific exhibitions of members’ artwork and, perhaps, that of visiting contributors.  The sub-committee, supported by the Trustees, have decided that the existing scheme (where contributors pay a fee each year to have their paintings hung) will be discontinued.  With limited numbers of hung paintings available in the revised gallery, we need to raise the standard of exhibited paintings and maximise the income from sales for the artists’ benefit, as well as the gallery’s commission (which will remain at 20% of sale price).  The sub-committee will therefore invite our members to submit paintings for hanging and will choose a variety of quality paintings to be hung.  The paintings will be rotated every month, so artists will have plenty of opportunity to have their artwork exhibited.  And, don’t be put off thinking that your paintings aren’t good enough!  As I tell many of you, your standard is much better than you imagine.  Offer them up and let the sub-committee decide which paintings are best to exhibit – you may be amazed!  For the rest of October, we will be keeping the exhibition of the lockdown paintings.  But, from 1st November, we will be displaying different paintings which do not necessarily need to have been painted during the lockdown.  So offer up your best paintings and let Keith’s team decide which ones to hang.  You can bring them along to the NAC whenever it is open, or contact me on the new email or phone number and I will arrange for your artwork to be collected.  Remember, even if you don’t want to sell your paintings, you can offer them up for show with a ‘NFS’ (not for sale) tag.  To demonstrate how much the new layout has promoted our paintings; we sold three of our paintings in just over a week once we were re-opened.  A sign of things to come?  Additional, Sue Case will be implementing a similar system for the jewellery and craftwork to be shown in the glass displays and the ‘craft corner’ of the shop.  She will be in touch with the regular contributors shortly.  If you want to join in, please get in touch with Sue (via the NAC email or phone if you don’t have her personal details).  **Lockdown Competition**  It was a hard choice to make!  So many brilliant paintings; so diverse in subject and style; and showing how you have all progressed with the practice you were getting during the lockdown.  I am pleased to announce that Joan White was the close-fought winner with her ‘Bull’s Head’.  Joan’s painting was chosen, not just for its intrinsic quality, but also because it illustrated the fantastic improvement in Joan’s standard demonstrated by her various submissions during the lockdown.  If you want to see what I mean about the general standard and improved standards, please look at the gallery on the new website: [**https://newbigginartscentre.org/gallery/**](https://newbigginartscentre.org/gallery/)  **NAC Logo**  A new name, a new logo  Now it is time to put your thinking caps on again and come up with a logo which best represents the Centre  As before, the designer of the winning logo will be awarded a prize.  So, it is a good job that the prize for the Little Gem Logo competition winner had been re-donated back to the Gallery for future use.  Please pass your designs to me, or email them in electronic form if you can; and we will let you know the winner as soon as possible; hopefully in the next newsletter.  **Free Creative Workshops**  We have established a working relationship with Creative Arts North East.  It is a natural relationship as both groups are working to support the local community to socialise through their involvement in artistic pursuits.  Together, we would like to offer NAC members the opportunity to take part in Free Creative Workshops.  Here is an introduction to the activities from Alan Vinters who runs the workshops with his colleague Susan Crisp:  “Come along and join our new Creative and Digital Support Workshops which are free to eligible Northumberland residents aged over 55.   Enjoy learning new creative skills, such as, working with clay, ceramic tile painting, working in various mediums and learn how you can connect virtually, whilst staying safe working in small, friendly bubbles of between 2 to 4 people.”    Creative Workshops will run on a Saturday, 2.30 to 4pm, at the Newbiggin Arts Centre.  The start date will be as soon as possible; depending on the uptake, it could be as early as 17th October.  If you would like more information about the workshops, Alan and Susan would love to hear from you.  Their contact details are:  Phone:       07411 170 604  Email:        [alan@creativeartsnortheast.com](mailto:alan@creativeartsnortheast.com)  [susan@creativeartsnortheast.com](mailto:susan@creativeartsnortheast.com)  Website     [www.creativeartsnortheast.com](http://www.creativeartsnortheast.com/)  Facebook  <https://www.facebook.com/creativeartsnortheast>  **Quality Printer**  We have made a significant investment (helped by a grant from the NCC Community Chest) in a new professional quality A3+ printer which links with our new laptop.  With this new Giclée' printer, we can produce Fine Art Prints from your photographs or scans.  While the term Giclée' originally referred to fine art prints created on IRIS printers (large format colour inkjet printers which became prevalent in the 1980's) the term Giclée' has since been used in a wider sense to describe any fine art prints made using an inkjet process.  Whatever the technology, you will be amazed by the quality of the prints.  I did an example and compared it to my standard high-quality A3 printer and the difference is remarkable.  The colours are so deep and intense, it was hard to tell the difference between the original painting and the Giclée' print on canvas paper.  As an introductory offer, we will be offering members the service of Giclée' prints up to A3 size for a very reasonable price.  For example, an A3 print for your personal use would be about £8; A3 prints produced for commercial sale would start at £10.  We hope to offer this service beyond our membership on a commercial basis.  So, if you know anyone with a requirement, please pass them on to me.  **Northumberland Lottery**  Even more winners in the last few weeks.  I certainly like this alternative form of income.  Don’t forget to join in with the Lottery and encourage your friends too.  For more information visit: [www.NorthumberlandLottery.co.uk](http://www.NorthumberlandLottery.co.uk)  click on ‘Buy Tickets’ and search for The Little Gem Arts and Crafts Gallery.  **The Sunflower Project**  You will have seen the sunflowers displayed in our newly constructed ‘Paintings Window’.  There is still room for yours, if you haven’t already submitted them.  In fact, although that wasn’t the intention, Diane has already sold one of her sunflower paintings and, as a result of exhibiting her sunflower, Jeanette has won her first ever commission which will be delivered to the lucky benefactor today.  Feel free also to submit your entries electronically to the SAA:  [ENTER CHALLENGE](https://community.saa.co.uk/enter-challenge/?competition=415204)                                  [View Gallery of Entries](https://community.saa.co.uk/challenges/sunflower-project/?utm_source=SAA+Database&utm_campaign=3141d1a1d2-31+07+2020+Corona+Inspiration&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_69c0b1655a-3141d1a1d2-176503557&mc_cid=3141d1a1d2&mc_eid=db4123d773#challenge-gallery)    [**Stay safe and healthy!**](https://www.sky.com/watch/title/series/ea09995e-34a0-4d81-bb30-aa8440cf722f)  [**Steve Wilkinson**](https://www.sky.com/watch/title/series/ea09995e-34a0-4d81-bb30-aa8440cf722f)  [**steve@newbigginartscentre.org**](mailto:steve@newbigginartscentre.org)  **077 66 856 365**  [**5th October 2020**](https://www.sky.com/watch/title/series/ea09995e-34a0-4d81-bb30-aa8440cf722f) |
| Little Gem Art & Craft Gallery  Charity Number 1163002  (soon to be officially re-named; Newbiggin Arts Centre)  Committee members:  Christine Davison  Valerie Hearn  Heather Peel  Keith Robson  Fiona Rowley  Sue Case                    - Secretary  Steve Wilkinson          - Chairman and Treasurer |
| [*If you do not wish to receive further mailings from Little Gem, please click here.*](mailto:steve@newbigginartscentre.org?subject=UNSUBSCRIBE) |