



A Message from your Chair

Looking back on the past year, **it is very satisfying to see how successful our 'Arts for All' project has been over the past eight months.** Funded by the **National Lottery Community Fund** (which also funds our irreplaceable Admin Officer, Wendy) and the **Northumberland Inclusive Economy Community Partnership (NIECP)**, we have been able to bring in new tutors to deliver a wide range of courses and workshops.

We were able to provide ceramics, photography, pastels, watercolours (and other media), digital art, woodworking and textiles programmes, as well as a couple of cultural evenings. The statistics for which are truly amazing: In the 8 months we have delivered a total of **148** extra sessions, consisting of **792** attendee-sessions to a total of **134** unique individuals, many of whom attended multiple courses and workshops. I don't think we could have ever envisaged this level of increased engagement when we started the project.

Our thanks go out to all our new tutors for the fantastic job which they have done. Without them, we could never have achieved so much. We look forward to working with all of them, and perhaps some new faces too, as we go forward.

Unfortunately, the NIECP funding ended at the end of December. So, 'Arts for All' will (for now) be financed solely by the Community Fund. We are therefore having to streamline the number of courses which we will be offering at the start of 2025 to stay within budget. This means that, initially, we will not be able to offer the *full* range of courses - until such time as we manage to obtain further grant cover. We apologise to those who will not be able to partake in their preferred sessions.

Winning the two grants was a welcome windfall, providing a great opportunity to deliver the many extra courses and workshops. It truly was a unique programme of sessions, that we were grateful to be able to provide to the community. Rest assured that we are definitely going to work hard to try and make it happen again! Because we do plan to re-introduce the whole range of courses (and more) later in the year!!

Watch this space for details of what is to come.



Committee Meeting Update

We held our first committee meeting of 2025 on Monday, 13th January. It was a good time for us to reflect on the past year and begin planning for the upcoming one.

On reflection, we think everyone can agree that our past year has been one of change, growth, and development. We've had tremendous success with all the new and different courses and workshops we delivered: ceramics, photography, watercolour, pastels, to name just a few.

The number of new members has increased significantly; it is so great to see new people, all ages and abilities join in and help make NAC the 'go to' place in Newbiggin!

Planning ahead, our aim is to build on these successes and continue to provide a wide variety of classes and clubs. We want to go even further; and we are going to do this by building in more flexibility in what we offer, and how we run our classes and clubs.

A recent example of how we are doing this, is our Wednesday's Drawing and Mixed Media Course with tutor Gary Simpson. His approach of providing one-on-one support for all mediums: drawing, watercolours, and acrylics, has proven to be a hit, evidenced by the increasing number of people coming along. Well done, Gary! For anyone who wants to improve their drawing, or just paint their own thing, there are still some spaces left in his class.

We are also going to test run a brand new concept—a TGIF (thank goodness it's Friday) club where people can come along and spend as much or as little time as they want for a set fee. More details of this are found in our new courses section.

Our Celebrating Winter Exhibition was a hit! So many visitors and so many wonderful comments about the excellent artwork on display. Visitors were given the opportunity to vote for their favourite, and the winner is Tracey Galvin, who will receive a gift voucher next week. Well done, Tracey!

Our Friday evening's Children's Club is back in full force after the Christmas break, and we are very pleased to welcome two new volunteers to the team to help Sue Case run it. Donna Fitch and Elaine Porter: a huge thank you and we hope you enjoy helping the children as much as Sue does!



Sue Andrew and Tracey Galvin

There are a couple of dates for you to put into your calendars. The first is 17th February when we hold our Annual General Meeting. As always, we welcome anyone with an interest in the running of our charity to attend. It will be held at 10:00 at our Front St. studio. We hope to see you then!

In order to give our artists as much notice as we can, the second date to put in your calendars, is the Spring Exhibition which will run from the 2nd to the 30th of May. As we are in the midst of Winter, now is a great time to start thinking about spring and what it means to you, so get your art materials out and start painting!

A major part of our planning for 2025 is of course the financial aspect. We, like so many other organisations (charities and otherwise), have to deal with rising costs. Our aim and mandate is to offer affordable and accessible creative opportunities for the community through our classes, clubs and workshops. In order to continue to provide these, at the same costs to our members, we have had to make some other cuts to our budget. This unfortunately, has meant that we have had to discontinue our cleaning services, provided by Sarah Wilson. We want to thank Sarah for her contribution and helping to keep our studios in good shape.

As we no longer have a cleaner, we are asking everyone who attends our studios to help keep them clean and inviting. Just simple things like putting dirty dishes in the dishwasher, wiping down your table or the work surfaces in the kitchen after use, will go a long way in helping to keep our environment a clean one.



Did you know...

“I’ve lost my mojo”... How often have we heard someone say this (or have said it ourselves), especially this time of the year?

The Oxford Dictionary defines ‘Mojo’ as: magic, charm, power, and influence. A more popular use today refers to: excitement, interest, energy and enthusiasm.

Did you know that losing your mojo is a common thing for artists—it’s actually normal and something any artist can expect.

So, if we’ve lost our ‘mojo’, how can we get it back—especially this time of year when it can be hard to get motivated?

Some tips that may help you:

First, and most importantly, don’t forget that **you’re not alone**.

Look for inspiration. There are lots of ways to find art that inspires you. Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook art clubs, and even good old-fashioned books (we have plenty of them at our Front St. studio).

Try something completely different - leave your comfort zone. Sign up for a class in something you’ve never done before. Use materials you’ve never previously used. It can be fun and freeing.

Instead of trying to create your masterpiece, **create something fun**. Just play with your pencils, pastels or paints.

Look to a fellow class member to support and/or mentor you.

Lastly, don’t give up coming to your clubs or classes—even if you don’t feel like making art, come for the social aspect—have a chat, enjoy a coffee, and hopefully before too long, you’ll get your mojo back!



New Courses

What is this TGIF club, mentioned earlier, all about? Well, we are always looking for ways to make our studios more accessible for people—a place where people can come and socialise while making some art.

What better time to offer this than on a Friday—a great way to end the week, or to ramp up for the weekend!

How it will work:

The TGIF club will be held at our Front St. studio. It will be open on Fridays, from 10:00 to 4:00, and for a fee of £4 (using your own materials) or £5 (using ours), you can drop in anytime and stay as long as you want within those hours. If you want to spend the day, you can bring your lunch, or enjoy a break at one of our local cafes (all very close by!). Why not give it a try?

The club will begin on Friday, 24th January. There is no obligation to sign up, you just need to turn up at a time suitable for you. Hope to see you then!

We have some new courses starting soon with some spaces still available:

Photography for Beginners - An eight-week course, starting 24th January, on Fridays, from 10 - 12, held at Gibson St. studio

Pastels Course - An eight-week course, starting 4th February on Tuesdays, from 10 – 12, held at Gibson St. studio

Watercolour & Mixed Media - An eight-week course, starting 4th February on Tuesdays, from 1 – 3, held at Front St. studio

Drawing and Mixed Media Class—With tutor Gary Simpson providing one-on-one guidance and support across all media. Held on Wednesdays, from 1 – 3, at our Front St. studio

For more information or to register for these or our other ongoing clubs, please contact Wendy, please contact Wendy at: info@newbigginartscentre.org or **07766 856365 or 01670 708269**



Exhibitions

Reflections Exhibition

Our latest exhibition features the art of our very own tutor, Gary Simpson.

This exhibition concentrates on the reflection of light using various mediums.

Gary has been a semi-professional artist for over 30 years and has worked in an art-based environment within the NHS, working with people with complex needs.

Gary has proven to be a popular tutor with his unique approach to learning in his 'Drawing and Mixed Media Class'. He bases his approach on individual needs and interests, so everyone can learn at their own pace, based on their own interests.

Why not drop by Front St. and enjoy (or purchase!) Gary's art. His exhibition runs from the **10th of January to 7th of February.**

Joint Genealogy Project—Newbiggin Maritime Centre

If you remember, last year we worked with the Family History Centre on a Genealogy Project. Our members used old photographs provided by the Family History centre as inspiration and produced their own interpretations. These artworks are now being exhibited in the café at the Newbiggin Maritime Centre, for the community and visitors alike to enjoy.

Then, for the months of February and March the exhibition, together with some more of the artworks produced, will transfer into the Latimer Room at the Maritime Centre.



How to Contact Us

If you want to sign up for a course, provide us feedback, or send us your ideas on what we can do better, we always appreciate hearing from you.

Contact us at:

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