



A Message from your Chair

As you can imagine, this time of year is really hectic while we apply for more grants to help fund our activities. On top of this, we are signing up some more tutors for the immediate future and for when we have some more funding. This all takes time and lots of midnight oil. That explains why you may not have seen much of me over the past few weeks. I miss the socialising at the Centres and look forward to breaking the back of the grant applications and tutor sign-ups processes, so that I can spend more time with my friends in our special community.

However, one thing which I couldn't miss was the opening event for the Northumberland Open Exhibition 2025 at Woodhorn Museum last Thursday evening. What made it even more special was the number of submissions which were accepted from our members. We seem to have more and more accepted year after year. The standard of the exhibition was absolutely fantastic and, in my opinion, the best exhibition to date. The submissions from our team were equal to the high standard of the other exhibits. Make sure that you go along and view the exhibition before it closes on 1st June – you will not be disappointed!

I would also like to encourage all of our members to think about offering artwork for next year – even if you have never submitted anything for exhibiting beforehand. You are all good enough – even if you don't think so yourself! I will keep you in touch when the details come out (usually in October) and we will make a concerted effort to get even more artwork entered and accepted in 2026.



Committee Meeting Update

On Monday, the 17th of February we held our Annual General Meeting. In addition to sharing all the legal and financial 'stuff' in the meeting, we celebrated our successes: the significant increase in the number of new members, workshops and courses, all delivered by our eight new tutors! This would not have been possible if not for the funding from our sponsors, such as:

- National Lottery Community Fund
- Northumberland Inclusive Economy Community Partnership
- Northumberland County Council
- Newbiggin Town Council
- Ballinger
- Hadrian Trust
- Foyles Foundation, and
- Catherine Cookson

We also shared our plans for the future. For example, we want to continue to expand on our offer, introduce a membership scheme, expand the scope of our advertising (in particular social media and our website), and importantly, recruit additional Trustees to help us with all of this. Something else we are really excited about, is the idea of developing Newbiggin's very own dedicated art gallery (more on this at a later date).

If you are interested in having a look at our presentation, it is available on our website: <https://newbigginartscentre.org/elementor-repository/>

If you have any questions or comments, we are always interested in hearing from you!

In our other news, we are excited to let you know that we have made a huge contribution to the Northumberland Open Exhibition 2025 at Woodhorn Museum! This year, Woodhorn had an unprecedented number of submissions - 458, of which 379 were accepted. Ten of our current members have a total of 22 submissions on display—quite an achievement. This really does showcase our local talent—well done to all!

In early March, our Board of Trustees are going to take part in two business planning workshops, facilitated by Kate Duffy from Junction Point. In preparation for this, we have asked a member of each class/club to fill in a brief questionnaire that will provide us with feedback to help us with our planning. As always, we encourage all of our members to let us know how we are doing, and what we can do better, so if you have any thoughts, please drop Wendy an email, we'd love to hear from you (contact information below).

Steve has just finished cleaning and refilling all the watercolour pallets and cleaning and sorting all the watercolour brushes. It was no easy feat, so thank you Steve! To make sure Steve's work doesn't go to waste, we ask that you please clean the pallets and make sure that all brushes are cleaned and put back in their cases after your session. Also, please remember to wipe off any paint (especially acrylics or oils) from the easels if you use them.

Thank you all for playing your part in helping us to keep all of our materials in tip top shape!

We have a few busy months ahead. We are picking up the pace in applying for new funding/grants, organising a number of new workshops (printmaking, life drawing, botanics, ink, and calligraphy), and running our new classes and clubs. We are also working hard in improving our communication and marketing via social media and our website. This is a lot for our small team of Trustees and thereby, **we are looking for one or two new people who are passionate about NAC and the work we do to join us as a Trustee.** We will be posting an ad detailing the role and responsibilities in the next few weeks, but in the meantime, if you think this is something you might be interested in, please let us know, we'd be happy to have a chat with you.

If you've used our library recently, you will have noticed that it has been revamped! All the books and resources have their own sections and are numbered for easy access (and replacing!). We encourage everyone to use the library and only ask that you put the books back in their place when finished with them.

For our artists, don't forget to put the Spring Exhibition (from the 2nd to the 30th of May) in your calendars. As we begin to see the signs of spring, now is a great time to get your art materials out and start painting!



Did you know...

We are trying out something new. This section of the newsletter will be a space for us to share any art related tips or information with each other. It can be anything, little or small, that can be helpful.

If there is something that you think can be of interest to others, please email your thoughts to Wendy.

Just to get you started, a tip from Leigh...

Did you know that Murphy's Wood Cleaner is great for cleaning acrylic paint off brushes?

For brushes that need a good clean, just soak them overnight and then rinse them out the next day. To make things even easier, you can keep a container of it, diluted with water, and then just put your brushes in. The great thing is, is that the solution can be used a number of times before you dispose of it.

Thank you Leigh!





Classes, Clubs, & Workshops

First of all, a big Welcome Back Keith! We have missed you and are looking forward to your return to your oils and watercolour clubs beginning this week!

New Saturday Ceramics Club

If you have experience working with ceramics, you may be interested in trying out our new ceramics club where you can practice what you've learned in a fun and relaxed environment. You'll have the opportunity to work on your own projects (no tuition) using NAC tools and materials.

The sessions will be held on Saturdays at our Gibson Street studio on the following dates:

- 15/03, 22/03, 12/04, 26/04, from 10-3, and
- 24/05 from 10am–1pm

There is a fee of £10 per session to cover the cost of materials with an additional cost for firing.

You can book your place with Wendy at: 07766 856365 or 01670 780269 or email info@newbigginartscentre.org. As places are limited, make sure you book early!

TGIF Club

Don't forget about our new TGIF club held at our Front St. studio on Fridays.

We are open 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?

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 780269**



Exhibitions

A quick reminder that our exhibition of our members' oils will end on the 5th of March, so make sure you drop by to have a look—it really is a stunning exhibition!

Coming next (details will be available soon) will be an exhibition by Vik (Victoria Gooding) on 'The Beauty of Animals' running from 7th March until 4th April.

And now for something new...

Did you know that you can now see the past five exhibitions on our website? It's really easy (and amazing!). Just go to <https://newbigginartscentre.org/events/> and follow the directions.

We have a great opportunity for you!

NAC currently have a display of work from some of our members in the windows at Northumberland Community and Voluntary Action (NCVA) on Station Road, Ashington.

As the display needs to be changed in March, this is a great opportunity for you to showcase (and sell!) your work slightly further afield.

If this interests you, please let us know. Unfortunately, NCVA's site is not suitable for watercolour, but all other media is welcomed.

Works should be labelled with your full details and can be brought to the Front Street studio by Friday, 7th March. They will be on display for 6-8 weeks.



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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