



A Message from Your Chair

Having recovered from the Front Street celebrations, I am still in a reflective mode:

I've been thinking how wonderful it is to see how much is happening at Newbiggin Arts Centre. From trying something completely new with Pablo's origami, to our growing ceramics programme, exciting exhibitions, outreach into the wider community and all the wonderful work of our volunteers, there's a real sense of energy and possibility around the Centre.

We've also recently received our first Gift Aid refund for 2023-4, which is fantastic news. This additional income (over £6,000!), made possible by the generosity of our members, will help us provide more courses and materials and contribute towards the costs of running our studios. A huge thank you to everyone who has supported us through Gift Aid.

If you haven't signed up yet, please get in touch with Wendy. As a UK tax payer, it doesn't cost you anything; all you need to do is fill in a very simple form and the lovely HMRC will give us back 20% of your contributions – including all the donations collected when you attend the groups, classes and workshops.

What makes me particularly proud is that, alongside all these new opportunities, we continue to be a place where people can come together, learn, create and simply enjoy being part of a friendly community. There's lots more to look forward to, and I hope you'll continue to be part of our journey.

Thank you to everyone who helps make the Arts Centre the special place it is.



Life at the Arts Centre

There's always something happening behind the scenes at the Arts Centre! From new ideas and exciting developments to the people, projects and little changes that help make our Centre such a vibrant place to be. Here's a peek at what's been going on and what's coming up.

A Huge Thank You to Our Interns!

As our latest internships come to an end, we want to say a huge thank you to Pablo and Bex for everything they have brought to Newbiggin Arts Centre.

Both have made their own unique contribution, enhancing what we offer and helping us look at new possibilities for the future.

Pablo brought something completely different to the Centre, with his origami course. It was wonderful to see members trying something new, learning new skills and, most importantly, enjoying themselves. His creativity and enthusiasm brought a lovely new energy to our programme.

Bex has helped us look at the bigger picture, working on a new Business Plan to help us become even stronger and more organised. Her work has identified lots of exciting opportunities for us to develop, improve what we do and open up even more opportunities for our members and the wider community.

We are incredibly grateful for the time, ideas, enthusiasm and fresh perspectives they have shared with us. **Their impact will continue long after their internships have ended.**

So, a big thank you to Pablo and Bex! We've loved having you as part of the Arts Centre team and really appreciate everything you've brought to us during your internships.

Hopefully, like Lara, you'll both continue your relationship with the Arts Centre, and we wish you every success and happiness for whatever comes next.

Paint, Sip & Butterflies!

Our latest Paint & Sip session was all about butterflies — and what a lovely evening it was!

Led by our very own Chair, Steve, the paint was flowing and, thankfully, so were the bubbles! There was plenty of laughter and encouragement as everyone created their own beautiful butterfly, ready to hang in a window and add a splash of colour at home. It was a wonderfully relaxed and fun session, with everyone leaving with something they could be proud of.

Never picked up a paintbrush before? That's absolutely fine! These sessions are perfect for beginners, with lots of help, encouragement and guidance along the way.

They're proving very popular, so we'll be bringing you more Paint & Sip sessions soon. Keep an eye out and make sure you don't miss the next one!



Pablo's Origami Course

Pablo's origami course was a real success, with participants leaving each week feeling proud of what they had achieved. They were fascinated by Pablo's remarkable skill and the intricate creations he brought along to inspire them, as well as the amazing possibilities of creating complex designs from just one piece of paper — with no cutting allowed!



His presentations on the history of origami and the work of expert practitioners added another fascinating dimension to the course.

Participants also appreciated being able to learn in the way that suited them best, with each stage demonstrated by Pablo, shown on screen and supported by clear instruction sheets.

We certainly hope to see Pablo back at the Arts Centre before too long, with more wonderful creations and new things to demonstrate!

Have You Discovered Our Shop Yet?

Our little shop has had a brilliant makeover — and it's looking more like a *proper shop* than ever!

A huge thank you to Fran, one of our wonderful volunteers, for creating our lovely new sign, and to Wendy, who finally put her foot down and got Steve to help her clear out the office to make some room for all those goodies!

There's now a great selection of art materials, supplies and creative goodies, beautifully displayed and with some fantastic bargains to be found. There are also plenty of lovely gift ideas, so it's definitely worth having a browse next time you're at the Front St. studio.

Also, a reminder that our donation box is always grateful for your unwanted art materials — new or previously loved, as long as they're still in good condition.

Your donations could find a new home and give someone else the chance to get creative.



So, if you haven't had a look yet... come and see what you can find!

Well done, team — it's looking fabulous!

Ready to Respond: CPR & Defibrillator Training at Front Street

You will all have seen the new defibrillator which we have installed just outside the door at Front Street, where it is available to the general public as well as our own community.

We hope we never have to use our defibrillator, but it's reassuring to know that our Front Street Studio has volunteers who are trained and ready to respond if an emergency ever happens.

On Friday 14 August, our volunteers were invited to a free CPR and defibrillator awareness session delivered by Paul Brolly, Community Resuscitation Development Officer with the NHS Volunteer and Development Team.



It was a really informative and engaging session, combining demonstrations with the opportunity to practise CPR for themselves using 'Little Anne', the CPR training mannequin.

The session gave everyone a chance to learn what to do in an emergency, ask questions and build their confidence.

While we certainly hope their training is never needed, it's great to know that we have trained volunteers on hand who could potentially make a real difference when it matters most.

A big thank you to Paul for an excellent session and to our volunteers for taking part!



Enriching Lives Through Arts Activities

We're so happy to welcome more than 200 people who join us each week for a wide variety of arts activities, learning new skills, discovering their creativity and enjoying the company of like-minded people. However, we know there are many others who would love to take part but aren't able to come to us. We don't want them to miss out, so we're taking the art to them through an exciting new outreach programme.

To get us started, Lara McFarland, who many of you will know as one of our talented artists and tutors, will be taking her creative sessions into De Baliol care home, just around the corner from the Arts Centre. Once a week for three months, Lara will deliver a range of arts activities for the 54 people who live there, along with their carers.

The project will run from Friday 6 November until 5 February 2027, with the participants' work then being brought back to the Arts Centre for a special exhibition in early 2027 — giving everyone the opportunity to see the creativity that has been happening right on our doorstep.

Lara said, *“This is a fantastic opportunity to engage people in the arts and for everyone to see the hidden artistic talent within our local community.”*

As a brand-new area of work for us, we're incredibly grateful to **Community Foundation North East and the Belong Fund** for supporting us with a grant to launch the project and explore what outreach could mean for the Arts Centre.

We'll be sharing our progress through this newsletter and on social media — and we can't wait to see what happens when we take our creativity beyond our own four walls!

Blooming with Creativity

We're delighted to be part of **Bloom**, Newbiggin's month-long celebration of all things that bloom in the natural world — from flowers and gardens to creativity, community and new ideas.

To celebrate, we're holding a special **Bloomin' Lovely exhibition** at Newbiggin Arts Centre (from the 16th of October to the 13th of November), and we'd love our members to be part of it. Whether you paint, draw, make, stitch, sculpt or create with clay, this is your chance to create something inspired by the joy of blooming.

And there's more to celebrate...

As part of this celebration, we'll also be hosting our very first Preview Evening!

Artists exhibiting in the exhibition will be invited to bring along family and friends for a special first look at the display (Friday, 16th October – so hold the date!), with light refreshments and the chance to meet fellow artists. Think of it as a little bit of gallery glamour, with a very Newbiggin twist!

Visitors and members will also be able to vote for their favourite artwork using our ballot box, with prizes awarded to the artworks receiving the most votes.

Whether you're a complete beginner or a more experienced artist, we'd love you to take part. It's a fun, happy theme and a great opportunity to get creative, try something new and share your work with others.

We're incredibly grateful to **Advance Northumberland** for providing the funding that has made both our Preview Evening and the exhibition prizes possible.



This support is particularly meaningful as creativity, connection and wellbeing are at the heart of what we do — and aligns with Advance Northumberland's priorities for community wellbeing, inclusion and skills. Their funding is helping us create more opportunities for people to come together, get creative and enjoy the wellbeing that taking part in the arts can bring.

Keep an eye out for our Bloom ‘Invitation to Submit’ poster, coming soon, with full details of how to submit your work and the important dates.

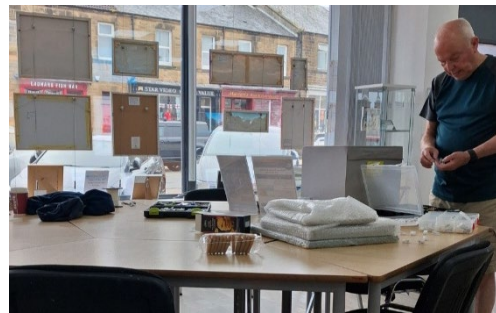
So, let's **Learn, Make, Share and Grow** together — and make Bloom at the Arts Centre something really special!

Help Us Bring Our Exhibitions to Life!

Ever wondered how an exhibition goes from a pile of artwork to a beautifully finished display? Our **Hanging Team** makes the magic happen — and we're looking for a few more friendly faces to join us!

No experience is needed. We'll show you the ropes, so it's a great opportunity to learn something new, get creative and pick up practical skills you can even use when hanging artwork in your own home!

Most importantly, it's fun, sociable and satisfying. There's something special about working together, seeing the exhibition take shape and knowing you've helped create a space where artists can share their work.



Our exhibitions change monthly, and while our brilliant core team does a fantastic job, they can't always be available. So, if you'd like to get involved, meet some lovely people and have a go at something different, **we'd love to hear from you!**

What's in a Name?

Our Gibson Street Studio has become a real hub for ceramics — and it's growing fast!

With popular hand-building and wheel classes, groups for children and adults, and our very own kiln, there's lots happening in our pottery space, with plenty more exciting plans for the future.

Now we need a name that helps everyone know exactly where the pottery magic happens — and we want you to help us choose it!

Got an idea? Write it down and hand it to Wendy, or email your suggestion to info@newbigginartscentre.org. Entries close on Monday 20 September, with the Ops Committee considering all the suggestions and choosing the winning name at its meeting on Monday 28 September.

Best of all, there's a little something in it for our winning entry! The lucky winner will receive a FREE pottery session and firing.



So, get your thinking caps on, get creative and give us your best idea...

What will you call it? Over to you!



Did you know...

Watercolour might look simple, but there's a lot more to it than putting paint on paper! It's also a wonderfully accessible medium for beginners — inexpensive to start, easy to take with you and capable of producing everything from delicate washes to vibrant, expressive paintings. The following are some tips to help you get started.

Start with less paint, not more: Watercolour is all about the relationship between water and pigment. Start with plenty of water and a small amount of paint, then gradually build up the colour. It's much easier to make a colour stronger than to rescue a wash that's become too dark.

Leave your whites alone! One of the biggest differences between watercolour and other paints is that you often create your lightest areas by leaving the paper unpainted. Before you start, look at your picture and identify where you want those bright highlights.

Build it up in layers: Don't try to get everything perfect in one go. Let each layer dry, then add another to gradually deepen shadows, strengthen colours and build detail. This is called layering or glazing.

Don't panic when it looks awful! Most watercolour paintings go through an 'ugly stage' — that point when you look at your painting and think, "*Oh dear... what have I done?*" This is completely normal!

At this stage, the painting may look flat, unfinished or even a bit of a mess because the lighter washes are down, but the darker tones and details haven't been added yet. Keep going! Give it a chance to develop before deciding it's a disaster. You might be surprised by what happens in the next few layers.

You don't need lots of colours: A small selection of paints can create an amazing range of colours. Experiment with mixing your own rather than reaching for a new colour every time. You may discover some beautiful combinations along the way.

And the benefits?: Watercolour can be wonderfully relaxing. The gentle process of watching water and colour flow across the paper encourages you to slow down and concentrate on what you're doing. It's also a great medium for experimentation because happy accidents can often become part of the painting!

Our beginner's tip: Don't fight the water too much. Let it do some of the work for you! That's part of the magic of watercolour.



Classes, Groups & Workshops

Come Along to One of Our Groups!

You may have heard us talk about our 'clubs' — but we're now calling them groups, because that's really what they are: friendly, welcoming and open to everyone.

Whether you fancy having a go at **watercolour, acrylics, oils, ceramics, crafts**, or simply want to '**do anything you want**', there's a group for you!

They run at different times throughout the week and are led by our wonderful volunteers, who are there to make sure everyone feels welcome, has fun and can learn from and encourage each other. And if you need materials, we can provide them too.

Our participants tell us what a great opportunity the groups have been — not only to learn new skills, but to meet people and make new friends.

You don't have to be an experienced artist! A group is a great way to try something out and see if you enjoy it before committing to a course or workshop. It's also the perfect place to practise and build on skills you've already learned, or simply to come along, get creative and enjoy some time for yourself.

So why not give it a try? Check out our website, give Wendy a call, or pop into one of our studios and we'll help you find the group that's right for you.



Exhibitions

Our Exhibitions – Past, Present & Upcoming

At the Arts Centre, we host a changing programme of exhibitions showcasing work from a wide range of artists and creatives. There is always something new to explore, with current and upcoming shows offering fresh inspiration throughout the year.

If you've missed one of our exhibitions, you can still view a selection of past shows virtually on our website—so you can catch up anytime, from anywhere.

We look forward to welcoming you in person or online to experience what's on.

What's on Now?

Meet **Terry Harbinson**, a full-time artist from Jarrow whose work is inspired by both Old Masters and contemporary artists. Working mainly in oils, Terry's landscapes explore the fascinating relationship between light, form and our perception of place.

For this exhibition, Terry celebrates the rugged beauty of the North East, capturing those often-overlooked moments that make this landscape so special.

Newbiggin Arts Centre
The place for all things art...where Arts are for All

**Sea-Carved Coastline,
Moor and Mountain!**

Now on

Many familiar vistas to recognise and enjoy, from the brush of **Terry Harbinson**

21 August to 18 September
Meet the Artist on
Sunday 23rd August 10 – 3pm

Contact us at:
749 Front Street, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, NE55 6DD
27 Gibson Street, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, NE55 6UT
info@newbigginartscentre.org
01793 816 365

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram icons

What's Coming Next?

Newbiggin Arts Centre
The place for all things art...where Arts are for All

Group Exhibition
featuring work from those who attended
Lara MacFarland's workshops and classes.

COMING SOON

**Inspirational art from free, expressive,
experimental ways of working.**

18 September to 16 October

Contact us at:
749 Front Street, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, NE55 6DD
27 Gibson Street, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, NE55 6UT
info@newbigginartscentre.org
01793 816 365

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram icons

Get ready for something a little different!

Coming next is an exhibition showcasing work by Lara's learners — a vibrant mix of free, expressive and experimental art.

Many of Lara's learners say her classes have changed the way they see and approach their art, and this exhibition is a wonderful chance to see that creativity unleashed.

Put the date in your diary — this is one you won't want to miss!



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:

74B Front Street, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, NE64 6QD
27 Gibson Street, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, NE64 6UY
info@newbigginartscentre.org
07766 856 365



Keeping in Touch — Your Choice

We love keeping our community up to date with what's happening at the Arts Centre, but we also want to make sure you only hear from us if you're happy to do so.

If at any time you'd prefer not to receive the newsletter or other Arts Centre emails, just let us know and we'll happily remove you from the list — no problem at all.

We're grateful for your support and interest in us, whether you follow every update or just drop in from time to time.