



A Message from Your Chair

A quick word about the people who help make the Centre what it is.

Wendy is currently enjoying a well-deserved holiday, and we're discovering just how much she does to quietly keep things moving! Sorry if my response to your emails has not been as efficient as Wendy's! Apart from that, we're managing perfectly well, but we'll certainly be pleased to have her back.

We're also delighted to welcome Rebekah Cooper (or Bex to her friends) as our newest Trustee. I'm sure the Centre will benefit from her business experience, fresh perspective and enthusiasm. She has already made some valuable contributions, and we're looking forward to seeing what else she has to offer – including, perhaps, something on the music front!

Both Wendy and Bex are reminders of the importance of the people behind the Centre – our staff, Trustees, volunteers, tutors and, of course, everyone who takes part in what we offer.

As you will see from the articles below, creativity and the arts remain at the heart of everything we do. However, increasingly, we're recognising the wider impact of what happens here: bringing people together, creating a sense of community, trying new things, having fun and contributing to our wellbeing. That's something worth celebrating, and we hope you'll continue to join us, get involved and enjoy everything the Centre has to offer – while, of course, producing some great artwork along the way!

All of this depends on having a strong and sustainable Centre. Grant funding is becoming increasingly difficult to secure, so we're very grateful for your continued participation and generous donations, which are helping to keep us in a sound financial position. We'll continue to look for new and creative ways to raise funds and, with your support, maintain the wide range of creative activities and opportunities that make the Arts Centre such an important part of our community.

Thank you for being part of it.



Life at the Arts Centre

This one is a bit of a short and sweet edition. As we only sent out our last big newsletter a few weeks ago, we thought we'd give you a break from reading a small novel about everything that's happening at the Arts Centre!

That doesn't mean that nothing is happening, though – far from it.

If you've been in and out of the Arts Centre recently, you'll know there's usually something going on – even when it doesn't look like it from the outside. There are conversations happening, ideas being thrown around, plans quietly taking shape and people getting stuck into the next project. It's all those little things, alongside the creativity and energy of our members, that keep the Centre such a lively and welcoming place.

September always feels like a bit of a fresh start, doesn't it? The summer is winding down, the children are heading back to school, and suddenly everyone seems to be getting themselves organised for a new term.

We're doing the same at the Arts Centre. It's a good time to take a breath, take stock and start thinking about what we'd like to do, make and try over the months ahead.

So, while this edition may be short and sweet, there's plenty bubbling away behind the scenes – and we're looking forward to sharing more with you as things take shape.

Welcome to Bex

We're delighted to welcome Bex to the Arts Centre team as our newest Trustee, following her internship with us.

During her internship, Bex helped the Centre think about its goals for the future, using feedback from our users and looking at how we can ensure future financial stability. Along the way, she grew to love the Centre's wonderful sense of community, its accessibility, and, of course, its beautiful location by the sea.

Bex's academic background is in folk and community music, alongside a wide range of creative interests and professional experience in corporate governance.

As a Trustee, Bex hopes to help the organisation develop a roadmap to survive whatever the future brings, so that we can continue to provide a lifeline to so many people across Northumberland. She is also passionate about inclusion and hopes to help us reach new audiences.

During her internship, Bex also began taking part in the ceramics group and discovered just how easy it is to get involved with anything at Newbiggin... **and how hard it is to throw a decent pot!**

We're very pleased that Bex has decided to stay with us, and look forward to seeing where her ideas, experience and creativity take her — although we can't promise to improve her pottery skills!

A Taste of Creativity

It feels fitting to look back on our **first ever Taster Session**, held in August, as we head into our autumn and winter programme; and wow — what a success it was!

There was a real buzz around the Arts Centre, with lots of people coming along to have a go, explore something new and simply enjoy being creative.

Pablo, our arts intern, demonstrated origami and helped people have a go, while watercolour proved popular with lots of budding artists. There was also plenty of interest in watching Sue Case demonstrate the art of felting, Gary doing his magic with charcoals, and our stunning ceramics display certainly caught the eye.



Most importantly, the session gave us a really useful insight into the kinds of creative activities our community is interested in trying.

This will help us shape our programme over the coming autumn and winter months — so there's hopefully plenty more for everyone to taste, try and discover.

A huge thank you to our wonderful volunteer Fran, who ran with the idea and helped make it happen, and to everyone else who played a part on the day.

It was lovely to give people the opportunity to **taste creativity — and discover just how good it can make you feel**. After all, a little creativity can do wonders for our wellbeing!

Ready. Set. Bloom!

We're delighted that so many of you have already expressed an interest in exhibiting your artwork in our **Blooming Brilliant exhibition**. It's fantastic to see such enthusiasm – and we can't wait to see what starts appearing!

There's still plenty of time to get creative, so if you've been thinking about taking part, now's the time to get those creative juices flowing.

Paint, draw, stitch, sculpt, work with clay – or try something completely different. If it's inspired by things that bloom, blossom or grow, we'd love to see it.

The exhibition runs from **16 October to 13 November**, with our special **Preview Evening on Friday 16 October**. There will also be prizes for the artworks receiving the most votes from visitors.



Thinking of taking part? **The Invitation to Submit** poster is now on display in both studios, with everything you need to know about entering your work.

So, what will you create? Pick up your brushes, pens, needles, clay – or whatever your creative weapon of choice happens to be – and let your creativity bloom!

A big thank you!

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



Their support is especially meaningful because creativity, connection and wellbeing are at the heart of what we do. It is helping us create more opportunities for people to come together, try something new, share their creativity and enjoy the many benefits that taking part in the arts can bring.

Have you named our pottery studio yet?

There are only a couple of weeks left to get your suggestion in!

Our Gibson Street Studio has become a real hub for ceramics, and now we need a name that helps everyone know exactly where the pottery magic happens. **Could you come up with the winning idea?**



Wendy has put a suggestion box in both studios, so simply pop your idea in the box next time you're in. You can also email your suggestion to info@newbigginartscentre.org.

Don't forget — there's a **prize to be won!** The person who comes up with the winning name will receive a **FREE pottery session and firing**.

Who knows? Your name could become a permanent part of Newbiggin Arts Centre — **you could even be immortalised in pottery history!**

So, get those creative cogs turning. What will you call it?

Carers Workshop: A Little Time for Themselves

Caring for someone else can be a hugely important and rewarding role, but it can also mean that as a carer, your own needs come a long way down the list. Our recent Carers Workshop was a chance to change that for a few hours – making time just for the carers.

The workshop brought together two very different activities that complemented each other beautifully: Reiki, led by Mary, and Zentangle-inspired art, led by Sue.

Mary introduced the group to Reiki, the Japanese practice using gentle hand placements to encourage relaxation and reduce stress. It was a quiet opportunity to slow down, take a breath and enjoy some peaceful time away from the usual responsibilities of caring.

Then it was over to Sue, who introduced everyone to Zentangle-inspired art.

Rather than drawing recognisable pictures, participants created abstract designs using simple, repetitive patterns – dots, lines, curves, swirls and orbs. There was no need to be ‘good at drawing’ and certainly no pressure to produce a masterpiece. The idea was to discover how relaxing and absorbing it can be to simply put pen to paper and see where the pattern takes you.

It was fascinating to see the blank pieces of paper gradually fill up. One little line led to another, then a curve, a swirl or a pattern, until each person had created something completely individual.



There was plenty of concentration, but also conversation and laughter – and perhaps the occasional “*I don't think I'm doing this right!*” Fortunately, with Zentangle, there isn't really a wrong way to do it.



By the end, everyone had created their own finished piece of artwork.

There was an added bonus. Along with a little time to relax and enjoy themselves, the carers had discovered a new creative skill they could pick up whenever they needed some quiet time – perhaps with a pen, a piece of paper and a few minutes to themselves.

It was a lovely reminder that caring for others doesn't mean forgetting to care for yourself. Sometimes, something as simple as a few gentle lines on a piece of paper can provide a little space to breathe.

Keep Creativity Thriving – Support Your Arts Centre

As you've been reading this newsletter, we hope you've spotted something.

There is a lot more to the Arts Centre than rooms, classes and exhibitions. It's the people who walk through our doors. The person who discovers they can paint after all. The carer who gets a couple of hours to themselves. The learner who surprises themselves with what they can create. The volunteer who gives their time. The friends who meet here, the conversations that happen, the new ideas that start and the confidence that grows.

In other words, **the Arts Centre is what happens when a community comes together to be creative.**

We're proud of what we offer, but keeping all of this going takes more than creativity alone. It takes a community.

There are lots of ways you can help your Arts Centre continue to thrive – and they don't all involve putting your hand in your pocket!

Come along and take part

One of the most important ways to support us is simply to use the Arts Centre.

Come to a class or workshop. Join one of our groups. Visit an exhibition. Bring a friend. Try something you've never tried before. Every time you walk through our doors, you are helping to show that there is a real appetite for creativity in our community – and that this place matters.

Give your time

We couldn't do what we do without our wonderful volunteers. You might be able to give a few regular hours, help at an event, lend a particular skill or simply muck in when an extra pair of hands is needed. There are lots of ways to get involved, and your time can be just as valuable as your money.

Make a donation

Running an arts centre costs money – from materials and equipment to keeping our studios and facilities going. **Every donation, however large or small, helps.** If you're able to make a regular donation, that can be particularly helpful because it gives us a little more certainty when planning ahead.

Gift Aid it!

If you are a UK taxpayer, **Gift Aid is one of the easiest ways to make your donation go further – at no extra cost to you.**

When you sign up, we can claim an extra 25p from HMRC for every £1 you donate, provided you pay enough UK Income or Capital Gains Tax to cover the claim. So, a £20 donation can become £25 for us, simply by completing a Gift Aid declaration.

It takes just a few moments to sign up, and you only need to do it once for your eligible donations to us.

If you haven't already signed up for Gift Aid, please consider doing so. It really does make a difference. See Wendy to get a registration form.

Keep us in mind

This one is perhaps the easiest of all.

Tell someone about us. Bring a friend to an exhibition. Share one of our Facebook posts. Mention a class to someone who might enjoy it. Encourage someone who's never thought of themselves as "arty" to give something a try.

We rely heavily on grants and external funding to keep the Arts Centre running and to make our activities accessible. That funding is becoming increasingly difficult and competitive to secure, which means support from the people who value what we do matters more than ever.

You don't have to do everything. Just do what you can. Come along. Get involved. Volunteer. Donate. Gift Aid it. Tell someone about us.

Every bit of support helps us keep the doors open, the ideas flowing and creativity, connection and wellbeing at the heart of our community, so thank you!

Whether you've been coming to the Arts Centre for years or you've only just discovered us, thank you for being part of our story. We hope you'll continue to be part of what comes next.



Did you know...

You don't have to be an artist to be creative!

Take a page from our recent Carers Workshop and try a little **Zentangle-inspired doodling**.

Grab a piece of paper and your favourite pen. Start with a few dots. Join them with a wiggly line. Add a row of tiny circles, some curly swirls, little waves or a sprinkling of loops. Fill one space with stripes, another with dots, and another with whatever pattern your pen feels like making.

Don't plan it. Don't rub anything out. **Just let the pen wander.**

Watch as an empty page slowly becomes a jumble of tiny shapes and patterns. The more you add, the more interesting it gets – and somehow, while you're

concentrating on those little lines and loops, the rest of the world seems to go a bit quieter.

There are **no rules, no mistakes and absolutely no artistic talent required!**

So, the next time you find yourself with ten quiet minutes, why not give it a go? Find a comfy spot, make yourself a cuppa, pick up a pen and see where a blank page takes you. You might find that those few minutes of creativity give your mind a welcome breather – a little moment of calm that can be good for your wellbeing as well as your imagination.

Because creativity isn't something that belongs only to artists. We all have it. Sometimes we just need to give ourselves permission to play, experiment and make something. You might be surprised at what you can create – and how good it feels to simply make something for the sheer pleasure of it.



Classes, Groups & Workshops

Get Your Hands Dirty at Pottery Group!

Autumn is just around the corner, which means pumpkins are making an appearance at the Arts Centre – but these ones won't be ending up in a soup!

Our Pottery Group will be getting their hands into the clay and making **pinch-pot pumpkins**, using one of the simplest pottery techniques to create something wonderfully tactile and seasonal; and pumpkins are just the beginning.

A basic pinch pot can become all sorts of things – bowls, dishes, little pots, sculptures and whatever else your imagination comes up with.

Never tried pottery before? Come along to a class or workshop and we'll show you the basics.



There's no experience needed, and you can take things at your own pace.

Already got some pottery experience? Even better! You're welcome to come along and work on your own ideas. With plenty of pottery wheels to go around, there's lots of opportunity to experiment and get creative.

Pottery Group at Gibson Street
Wednesdays | 6–9pm
Saturdays | 10.30am–3pm

Suggested donation: **£10 per session**

So, whether you've always fancied having a go at pottery or you're already a dab hand with the clay, **come along, get your hands dirty and see what you can make!**



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?

Celebrating Lara and Her Learners

When Lara joined us as an intern last year, little did we know quite how much of an impact she would go on to make.

Since completing her internship, Lara has become a real mainstay of the Arts Centre, bringing energy, imagination and a wonderfully fresh approach to her classes. She has encouraged our members to step outside their comfort zones, look at art in different ways and, perhaps most importantly, discover that they can do things they never thought they could.

Lara's classes have become about much more than simply learning how to make art. They have given people the confidence to experiment, try something new and see their own creativity differently.

This exhibition is a celebration of that journey. **Every piece on display has been created by people who have taken part in Lara's classes**, and the work tells its own story of exploration, experimentation and growing confidence.

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.

ON NOW at Front Street



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

18 September to 16 October
Meet the Artists
Sunday 4 October
10 – 3pm

Contact us at:
01655 555111, 01655 555112, 01655 555113, 01655 555114
27 Station Street, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, NE26 5JY
info@newbigginartscentre.org
01655 555 555



So come and see what Lara's learners have been creating. You may recognise some familiar faces (meet the artists on Sunday, 4th October) – but you might not recognise what they've produced!

Most of all, this exhibition is a chance to celebrate Lara's success and the difference she has made to so many people through her teaching. We are delighted that our former intern has become such an important part of the Arts Centre – and even more delighted to see where her creativity and enthusiasm are taking our members.

What's Coming Next?

Something wonderfully colourful is coming to the Arts Centre this autumn...

As part of **Newbiggin's Bloom Festival**, our members will be celebrating everything that blooms, blossoms and grows in our next exhibition – **Blooming Brilliant!**



From flowers and gardens to all the wonderful shapes, colours and ideas inspired by the natural world, our members have been getting creative and putting their own spin on the theme.

The exhibition is a chance to see the many different ways our members have interpreted “all that blooms” – and we’re expecting a wonderfully varied collection of work.

Pop the date in your diary now – we’d love to see you there!

As well, because it’s part of the wider **Newbiggin Bloom Festival**, there will be plenty happening around the village to celebrate our love of flowers, gardens, growing and all things blooming.

Come along, have a wander, enjoy the exhibition and see what our members have grown on the canvas – **we think it’s going to be Blooming Brilliant!**



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.

[Click here to unsubscribe.](#)

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