



Oswin  
Project

# Newsletter

## Summer / Autumn 2022

### EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE HAILED A SUCCESS

The Oswin Project recently organised a landmark conference entitled Changing Perceptions. The venue was Newcastle Cathedral and the speakers included Dr Kameel Khan of Project Remake, Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Kim McGuinness, CEO of the North East England Chamber of Commerce John McCabe, Darren Burns of Timpsons, Lindsay Blackmore Deputy Director of HMP Northumberland and Lance Harris of the New Futures Network.

Darren Burns, National Recruitment Manager of Timpson's, emphasised the moral and economic impact businesses can have in rehabilitating offenders. Speakers agreed that, in an increasingly tight labour market, employing and supporting prison leavers both opens new recruitment channels and helps reduce reoffending. This benefits communities and the wider economy. Oswin Project service users spoke of their experience of the criminal justice system and the challenges they faced on release. Their accounts had a profound effect on all the delegates.

The Oswin Project CEO Fiona Sample closed the event saying; "Today has been enlightening and significant. We have heard moving testimony from prison leavers of the impact giving hope and a second chance has in breaking the cycle of reoffending. We need to carry this message to a wider audience to change society's perceptions."



**"We need to be building pathways that are understood and recognised by candidates and businesses, that take people from where they are to where they need to be. The important thing is to acknowledge individual circumstances, experience, strengths and weaknesses and provide support that's tailored to that."**

John McCabe CEO of the Northeast England Chamber of Commerce

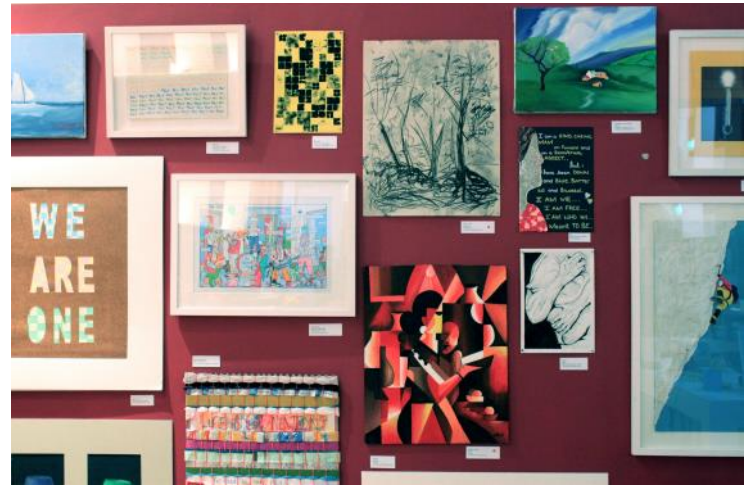
### NEW COFFEE MACHINE IN CAFÉ 16

From 21st June, customers at Café 16 in Newcastle Cathedral will be able to enjoy Ringtons award winning coffee from our new 'Casadio Undici' coffee machine. This machine will allow us to provide the highest quality coffee thanks to a generous grant from Newcastle Building Society and support from Ringtons Ltd supplying and installing the machine.



## ARTWORKS ON DISPLAY IN CAFÉ

In March, Café 16 in the Cathedral hosted a prison art exhibition, which shared the conference theme of changing perceptions. It showcased a variety of art created in prisons. The exhibition sought to challenge people's understanding of prisons and prisoners and promote greater knowledge of their circumstances and capabilities. Art was provided by Koestler Arts, from their annual competition for prison art which attracts thousands of entries from the 150 prisons in the UK. The Burnbake Trust who supply free art materials to UK Prisoners, HMP Low Newton and HMP Northumberland also contributed artworks.



Many of the artists created their work at the height of the pandemic when they were confined to their cells for 23 hours daily. They frequently worked with limited resources so the creation of each piece represented a significant

achievement. With over 2000 visitors to the exhibition, and 80% of the works sold to support the work of Koestler & Burnbake, the exhibition's success is fitting testament to the talent and experiences of those represented.

## INSIDE & OUT: REBUILDING WALLS & BRUNHILDA JOINS THE TEAM

The newest member of the 'Inside & Out' team weighs 6 tonnes is called Brunhilda and has already had a big impact on the work that they do. Grants from the Finnis Scott Foundation and the Postcode Neighbourhood Trust enabled Oswin to buy a new van for our 'Inside & Out' team.



The new van, a drop-sided double cabbed transit, is a significant step up from the small vehicle used by the team previously. John, Manager of the Inside & Out team, said "This new van is wonderful, it has been an integral part of expanding operations, enabling us to service clients' needs in a reduced time scale, and take on bigger jobs meaning we can offer even more people much needed second chances.'

storms. Five "Oswinners" rebuilt the wall, including Dave who has recently left prison and has been working with the team. Dave said:

During a busy two weeks in May, the 'Inside & Out' team completed their largest stone working job to date, a garden wall at Bothal Castle near Morpeth. The curtain wall dates back 800 years but was damaged by a tree in recent winter

**"It's amazing this project it really gets inside your mind, the stones seem to choose themselves and, when combined with the building expertise of the team, this has been the best job I've worked on in years"**

'Dave' newest member of the Inside & Out Team



The 'Inside & Out' Team can be contacted for quotes on 01670 462 495 or [trish.wilson@oswinproject.org.uk](mailto:trish.wilson@oswinproject.org.uk)

## LOTS GOING ON IN CAFÉ 16 IN THE CATHEDRAL

Café 16 in the Cathedral has provided the catering for more than 30 events since January. These have included buffet lunches for the Diocese, the 'Lit and Phil', and local businesses. Refreshments for meetings of local charities, a three-course meal for a local funders group, and canapes and refreshments after a service to mark the retirement of the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear.

The largest event that has been catered for was the National Cathedrals conference. This was held between Monday 16th May and Thursday 19th May at Newcastle Cathedral. Twenty four cakes were provided daily by our bakery in HMP Northumberland. Throughout the conference staff from Café 16 in the Cathedral supplied coffee and tea and worked alongside the staff from the civic



## PAT'S STORY

'... I wanted to let you and everyone at Oswin know just how grateful I am, I have to remind myself at times just how lucky I am to have this support and it's not something I am used to. I enjoy my job and like the people I work with, I have people around me who I can trust. No words can emphasise the positive difference and change the project provides everyone. Thanks for giving me the opportunity'

Pat joined our team at Café 16 in the Cathedral in October 2021. Despite a long daily commute, he says 'having a routine, a reason to get up in the morning, it is hard to put into words; the difference it has made'.

Initially, Pat had to work hard on time management and personal organisation. With support from a volunteer to help navigate the complications of bank accounts and living in a rental property, and regular work in Café 16 in the Cathedral, Pat's confidence has continued to grow. Pat has begun using his experience to advocate for ex-offenders, and better inform others about the challenges they face. Pat spoke passionately at the Oswin Project conference and participated in an upcoming documentary by User Voice. He recognises that his frank accounts of the realities of prison and substance addiction can be shocking but says "it's important because it helps to make an impact". Reflecting on the 23-hour lockdown conditions many prisoners faced during the COVID crisis Pats says:



centre to serve lunch every day.

Mother's Day also drew many visitors to the Café 16, as customers enjoyed a selection of treats, which like everything we sell, were made in our bakery in HMP Northumberland. Lucy, one of our customers said:

**"We had the most amazing afternoon tea in Café 16, the blueberry and white chocolate scones were to die for"**



**"There is a fine line between punishment and neglect. Prisons should realise that the COVID 19 regime can't be seen as the norm, they must see people as individuals and offer rehabilitation accordingly with incentives and support"**

Pat an Oswinner working in Café 16

The Oswin Project would like to congratulate Pat on all he has achieved. He continues to work hard, not only in changing his own life; but also to create change for others.

## FRESH SANDWICHES FOR PRISON VISITORS

Café 16 in HMP Northumberland recently began supplying 200 sandwiches per week to the prison's visitors' centre. It has also received a second 5\* environmental health rating.

As the impact of the COVID crisis lessens, the café is becoming busier, allowing us to train more prisoners in catering and food hygiene qualifications. It also helps them develop the skills and attitudes that lead to employment and purposeful and fulfilled lives on release, rather than re-offending.



**"I am thrilled with the team, getting a 5-star rating and completing these orders. They consistently uphold high standards and take real pride in their work, it's great to see their efforts recognised"**

Martin, Café Manager in HMP Northumberland

## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

The Oswin Project would like to thank all its funders for their support and generosity, without them we would not be able to transform lives through mentoring, training and work experience.

The AB Charitable Trust  
The Badur Foundation  
The National Lottery  
The Christopher Rowbotham Charitable Trust  
1772 The Debtor's Relief Fund Charity  
Finn Family Fund  
The Finnis Scott Foundation  
The Garfield Weston Trust  
Greggs Foundation  
The Hadrian Trust  
High Sherriff of Northumberland  
Hospital of God  
The Joicey Trust  
The Kerry Community First Endowment Fund\*  
The Hokey Cokey Fund\*  
The L G Harris Trust  
The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales  
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The Postcode Neighbourhood Trust  
The Rothley Trust  
RW Mann Trust  
The Sir James Knott Trust  
The Society of the Holy Child Jesus  
Star Fund\*  
The Ashcroft Charitable Trust  
The Barbour Foundation  
The Souter Charitable Trust  
The Worshipful Company of Grocers  
The Tudor Trust  
Warburtons Community Grants  
The Watkin Family\*  
The Welch Family Fund\*

\*at The Community Foundation, Tyne and Wear Northumberland.

The Oswin Project would also like to thank the many individuals who have made significant donations but wish to remain anonymous, the regular givers, the fund raisers and our volunteers who kindly donate their time and are so enthusiastic.

## Green Open Day 15TH OF JUNE HMP KIRKHAM

The Oswin Project working with the New Futures Network is hosting an open day at HMP Kirkham on the 15th June. While there are many successful industries in HMP Kirkham (which has 600 residents) the land-based sector which includes farming & horticulture has problems recruiting as it is not seen as a path to future employment. We know this is not the case. There is a high demand for drivers, pickers, fencers and foresters within the sector. The aim of the open day is to show the employment opportunities offered in this sector and the potential work force in HMP Kirkham.

## Empty Bowls WEDNESDAY 20TH JULY, 6PM TO 8PM

Join us at Cafe 16 in the Cathedral for some gorgeous handmade bowls filled with vegan, gluten free, chilli. All proceeds from the event go to the local food charities The People's Kitchen and Men's Pie Club. And of course you keep the bowl, handmade by a local potter!

Empty Bowls is being organised by The Clay Team and The Oswin Project. For tickets, go to [www.emptybowls.org.uk](http://www.emptybowls.org.uk)

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