

Freshly baked BREAD  
£2.50 each



Oswin  
Project

# Newsletter

## Summer / Autumn 2023

### WELCOME

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of The Oswin Project Newsletter. We hope it gives you an insight into the activities of the different enterprises, and the wonderful work our staff, volunteers and trustees do. The Prison population is at an all-time high and so is the demand for our help. The Oswin Project is growing while keeping firm hold of our core values: we are in the business of changing the lives of prison leavers to make society safer and fairer.

Good accommodation, a support network and decent, stable employment are crucial to prevent re-offending. Reducing re-offending is good for individuals, their families, victims of crime and wider society. The Oswin Project guides people into training and employment. We also employ prison leavers in our own enterprises while mentoring, training and encouraging individuals. If you would like to help us in anyway from volunteering to donating, do please get in touch.



### EAB CHAIR

Our CEO, Fiona Sample, pictured here at the opening of the farm shop recently became chair of the "Employment Advisory Board" (EAB) at HMP Durham. The initiative is the brainchild of James Timpson. Working in partnership with the Ministry of Justice's New Futures Network, each of the 141 Prisons in England and Wales is now required to have an EAB consisting of local employers, charities, a Prison

Employment lead and other members of staff. As a "resettlement prison", HMP Durham has a high percentage of prisoners who are awaiting trial which makes the role of the EAB more challenging than in some other prisons.



### OUR WORK IN NUMBERS

This year, we have worked with 35 serving Prisoners in our Café and Bakery inside HMP Northumberland. Since March '22, our Newcastle Cathedral Café has employed 10 prison leavers and provided short term work placements for a further 5 people and volunteering opportunities for 20. We have employed 6 people on our Inside & Out team since last year, with a further 5 offered short term work placements.

Our main work is directly supporting people with criminal records. Since March of last year our mentor manager has worked directly with 74 individuals. 43 have been supported into employment or training and an additional 31 have been helped with writing disclosure statements.

To keep up to date with Oswin's work, follow us on:  
[@OswinProjects](https://www.facebook.com/theoswinproject) [facebook.com/theoswinproject](https://www.facebook.com/theoswinproject)  
[www.oswinproject.org.uk](http://www.oswinproject.org.uk)  
[www.oswinproject.org.uk/newsletter](http://www.oswinproject.org.uk/newsletter)



## LEVEL 2 PATISSERIE & CONFECTIONARY

Over the last 6 months our team in Café 16 in HMP Northumberland have been working towards registering as a provider of City & Guilds Level 2 Professional Patisserie and Confectionery , supported by our Mentor Manager Caroline. Our Bakery is now offering Level 2 Professional Patisserie and Confectionery qualifications to 8 prisoners who have a passion for baking and an eagerness to learn.

The program offers a structured learning environment that combines theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Prisoners are taught the importance of health and safety, food hygiene and customer service, which are essential skills in any culinary career. They also have the opportunity to gain work experience by producing baked goods for the prison's Visitor Centre, our own café at Newcastle Cathedral and several local cafes and shops.

A unique feature of the Bakery is the level of support provided to prisoners. They receive regular feedback on their progress. The manager and assistant manager work closely with them to identify areas for improvement and provide individual guidance. In addition, pastoral support is given to help people deal with any personal or emotional issues that may arise during their training.

## 60 PEOPLE HELPED WITH DISCLOSURE

Last year, the Oswin Project started working with Reed Employment, supporting people on the government's Restart Scheme. Staff from the Oswin Project held consultations in Reed's offices in Newcastle, Gateshead and Durham, supporting people to write a disclosure statement, a very important tool when people with criminal records apply for jobs. We have now helped over 60 people, with two of them coming to work for The Oswin Project in one of our enterprises.



## LNER & LOTTERY VIDEOS

We could not have opened our Café 16 in Newcastle Cathedral without the support of LNER, who funded the salary of our Manager for the first year. They recently came in to film Micky, Fiona and Caroline. Micky explained how working in Cafe 16 and being employed in Cafe 16 had given him hope of a prison free future, purpose and support. Due to LNER Micky's plans for the future are beginning to become a reality. Together we are breaking the cycle of reoffending, one slice of cake at a time.



## TAKING OVER THE GARDENS IN HMP NORTHUMBERLAND

In partnership with Sodexo, we are taking over the running of the Market Garden in HMP Northumberland. The nearly 3 acre site includes poly tunnels, greenhouses, strawberry fields and a well-stocked orchard. The Oswin Project will provide mentoring, education while supporting prisoners who work in the gardens into employment and training following their release. Produce grown in the Gardens will be used in our Cafes, sold in the Farm shop with any surplus being donated to Amble Food Bank.





## FARM SHOP NOW OPEN AT HMP NORTHUMBERLAND

We are delighted to announce the opening of our farm shop, which offers fresh produce grown in the prison Garden at HMP Northumberland and beautiful wooden garden furniture and containers made by skilled joiners who have a workshop in the gardens. In addition to fresh produce, we also offer bedding plants and hanging baskets to brighten up your home or garden. And for those on-the-go, we have pre-packaged sandwiches, coffees and ice creams that are perfect for a quick snack or lunch.

Our farm shop is committed to providing high-quality products at reasonable prices, all while supporting a great cause. We believe that everyone deserves a second chance and that by providing opportunities for rehabilitation and education, we can create a safer and more prosperous communities. Any surplus produce we donate to Amble Food Bank and local charity The Peoples Kitchen.

The shop is open three days a week; Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays 11am to 4pm.

## HIGH SHERIFF EVENT

Café 16 catered for the High Sheriff's awards evening which was held in Alnwick play house on 27<sup>th</sup> March. The High Sheriff gave 36 Awards and most of the groups involved were well supported. At the end of the event the masses descended on our buffet from Café 16. Very soon there were only crumbs left as evidence on the plates.

## CORONATION EVENTS AT NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL

The Coronation was celebrated at Newcastle Cathedral with a specially recorded Radio 4 broadcast and a picnic on the Sunday. Café 16 provided the picnics in individual boxes which included delicious treats made in our Bakery in HMP Northumberland, and 'Coronation Quiches' made by our talented chefs working in the cathedral.

## BUILDING A NEW WALL FOR WELBECK ESTATES

For the last 4 months, the Inside & Out team have been working on a wall rebuilding project in a local village using their skills and expertise to transform an old, deteriorating wall into a beautiful and functional structure.

The project involved a range of tasks, from chain sawing trees and clearing undergrowth to dismantling and rebuilding the wall using traditional techniques. The team worked tirelessly through rain and shine, dedicating their time and energy to restoring the wall to its former glory.

For many of our team members, this project was an opportunity to develop new skills and gain valuable experience in an undertaking that inspired them. Building an ancient wall is a craft that requires patience, attention to detail and a steady hand, and our team rose to the challenge admirably.

As ex-offenders, our team members have faced many challenges in their lives, and this project allowed them to channel their energy into something positive and rewarding.

The completed wall is a testament to their hard work and dedication, and we are immensely proud of what they achieved. The wall will stand for many years to come as a memorial to their skill and commitment.



## 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.

Ashcroft Charitable Trust  
Badur Foundation  
Barbour Foundation  
Bernicia  
Christopher Rowbotham Charitable Trust  
Charles Haywood Foundation  
CLA  
Worshipful Company of Drapers  
The Drapers' Charitable Fund  
Finn Family Fund  
Finnis Scott Foundation  
Garfield Weston Trust  
Hadrian Trust  
High Sherriff of Northumberland  
Hokey Cokey Fund\*  
Hospital of God  
Joicey Trust  
Kerry Community First Endowment Fund\*  
L G Harris Trust  
Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales  
National Lottery  
Newcastle Building Society\*  
North Steads & Sisters Wind Farm Community Fund\*  
O'Fl  
Pattinson Estate Agents\*  
Pease Charitable Trust  
RW Mann Trust  
Roy & Pixie Baker Trust  
Sir James Knott Trust  
Society of the Holy Child Jesus  
Souter Charitable Trust  
Star Fund\*  
Tudor Trust  
Vardy Foundation  
Watkin Family\*  
W A Handley Trust  
Welch Family Fund\*  
William Leech Trust  
Wyfold Charitable Trust

\* 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.



### FIONA SAMPLE, MBE

We are delighted to announce that the Reverend Fiona Sample, CEO of The Oswin Project has been awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire Medal (MBE) in the King's Birthday Honours list 2023 for the rehabilitation of offenders.

On being informed of her award Fiona said 'I am immensely grateful to whoever nominated me. However, I do not feel the honour is solely mine, the accolade should be shared with my amazingly dedicated colleagues. Without them lives would not have been changed and the Oswin Project would not be flourishing and growing. Thanks, are also owed to HMP Northumberland and our Trustees for their support and congratulations to all our Oswinners (as we call our clients) not forgetting my long-suffering husband!'

Reflecting on her early days with the Oswin Project, Fiona said:

"I volunteered my time and worked with one part time member of staff to give prison leavers second chances and raise funding. It was rather challenging. We now have 12 permanent staff, a Bakery and Café in HMP Northumberland, a Café at Newcastle Cathedral, a farm shop and a skilled and qualified team who work on restoration projects, landscaping, decorating and forestry management. I am pleased to be able to tell prospective employers that a third of our salaried staff are prison leavers. They are key members of our team. We practice what we preach."

To keep up to date with Oswin's work, follow us on:  
[@OswinProjects](#) [facebook.com/theoswinproject](#)  
[www.oswinproject.org.uk](#)  
[www.oswinproject.org.uk/newsletter](#)