

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



£150,000 investment to
transform playing pitches

Green belt housing plan
scaled down

Bike thieves hit eight
homes in a night

School teams score rugby cup double

Amanda Williamson

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Ponteland's U16 Captain Michael Searle going for a try



Receiving the trophy from the President of the NRFU is Ponteland's U16 Captain Michael Searle

Ponteland players win rugby cup double

It was a great week for Ponteland Community High School as its rugby teams scored a cup double.

The Year 11 squad got the ball rolling by winning the U16 Northumberland Schools Rugby Cup in a tightly fought contest with Duchess's High School of Alnwick, which ended 17-14.

Just days later the Year 10 rugby team added another prize to their school's trophy cabinet by winning the Northumberland U15 cup, beating The Royal Grammar School 43-17.

Both matches were played at the Druid Park ground, Callerton.

Subject Leader, Boys' PE, Mr Allan Atkinson said: "The U15 team has had a great season, crowning it with an excellent win against a strong team from RGS."

He added: "The U16 team has been magnificent all season, and put up an excellent 'backs against the wall' performance against a strong team from Duchess."

The winning U15 squad comprised: Charlie Atkinson, Corey Beautyman, Callum Chick, Robbie Crow, Jake Dixon, Harry

Griffiths, Jonty Hudson, Jake Pickard, Sam Robinson, Tom Shield, Tom Skidmore, Adam Stephens, Jamie Taylor, Lewis Thompson, James Towart-Adams.

This month's cover shot shows the winning U16 squad: Adam Collard, Robbie Crowe, Jake Dixon, Harry Eglon, David Fenton, Josh Graham, Scott Graham, Lewis Greenwell, Rowan Horne, Adam Lawson, Phil McAreevey, Matty Nicholson, Dan Pow, Michael Searle, Jack Spells, Jamie Taylor, James Towert-Adams, Jordan Varah, Connor Welsh, Courtney West, Miles Worthington. Photos from the U16 cup final by Keith Robertson.

Revised police HQ housing scheme gets go-ahead

Changes to plans for a new housing estate in Ponteland have been given the green light.

Outline permission was granted by the former Castle Morpeth Borough Council in March 2009 for 150 new homes on part of the Northumbria Police headquarters site.

But Northumbria Police Authority (NPA) wanted to reduce the agreed level of affordable housing in the development from 50 per cent to 20 per cent, due to the current financial climate.

Northumberland County Council's West Area Planning Committee accepted the reduction as part of a legal agreement (Section 106) which also involves contributions from NPA of almost

£700,000 towards road, public transport and traffic improvements.

Planning officers said in a report that the application could be supported if it meant investment in police services and job retention could be successfully delivered.

The organisation will use the money raised from the scheme to help fund a £23m modernisation of the headquarters.

NPA property advisor Peter Udall said: "The approved planning application for the Ponteland site represents the best possible compromise, delivering affordable housing while still remaining financially viable.

"We are committed to keeping the number of affordable houses as high as possible, but realistically a figure of 20 per cent is the highest that can be delivered in the current financial climate.

"At present we have no indication as to when work on site could start, however we will ensure that local residents are kept fully informed."



P&G DONATE NEARLY £10,000 TO PONTELAND CHILDREN'S CHARITY

A disabled children's charity can splash out on more family activities after picking up almost £10,000 in funding support.

Ponteland-based Useful Vision, which supports more than 200 families with visually impaired children across the North East, received the £9,615 donation from more than 850 workers at P&G's Cobalt site.

The charity was nominated by Judith Corder, who is a member of the company's Community Matters Programme.

Useful Vision runs weekly trips and activities specially tailored to meet the needs of visually impaired children and young people from birth up to the age of 18. For more information about the charity visit www.usefulvision.org.uk

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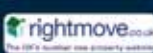
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GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Ponteland Youth Service

The Council agreed to consider at the April meeting a grant application for Ponteland Youth Service for 2012-13 following a report from Ashley Brown, Youth Services Manager for the West Area on successful work undertaken this year.

Ponteland URC Church (supported by Diagonal Alternatives and Age UK)

Councillors asked for more information on a bid for funding to set up a drop in service for older people suffering from dementia or Alzheimers Disease at the Ponteland URC Church at Broadway. The application will be considered at the April meeting.

Ponteland United Football Club

A grant of £500 was approved for the Football Club for funds towards the purchase of replacement footballs for the junior section and substitutes jackets for the reserves team.

PROJECTS REPORT

Statue modification at Coates Green

The plinth has now been installed.

West Road easy entrance

The order for the works agreed at the last meeting has been placed.

Car Park at Fox Covert Lane

Permission has been sought from Northumberland County Council (NCC) to go ahead with removal of the tree and hedge to allow easier pedestrian access at Fox Covert Lane. A reply from NCC is awaited.

Memorial Hall

A revision to the plans was agreed at a meeting held with representatives of the Memorial Hall. The Surveyor will now progress to pre-application discussions with NCC planning officers.

Coping stones at Waitrose bridge

This work had been approved at the last meeting but it was necessary to agree a revision to the price due to unforeseen circumstances, which was approved.

River bank repairs

Further proposals to carry out some works to the bank erosion in the park have potentially hit further problems with the Environment

Agency. It appears this work may be delayed until a resolution to the issues can be found.

Street information signs

The amended map has been sent off to Cityscape and the actual boards for the maps have now been installed at Broadway and on Main Street.

Coates Green path repairs

The Council agreed that some works were necessary on Coates Green to repair the paths. Details of quotes received were reported and the lowest quotation was approved.

Skate Park

The Council is still awaiting the draft lease for the Skate Park from NCC.

Park path lighting project

A meeting has been held with NCC in relation to the necessary power supply. Drawings are being prepared. It may be necessary to carry out these works in phases.

War Memorial

Following receipt of a letter sent out to businesses relating to the Diamond Jubilee, an offer has been received from Strettlles, who had offered to meet half of the costs of cleaning and re-lettering the War Memorial. This offer was gratefully received by the Council and it was agreed that the works should go ahead and that Strettlles be thanked for their generosity.

PARTY IN THE PARK 2012

A request for permission to use the Park for the event being held on June 17 was approved and it was agreed that the Council would meet the cost of providing portable toilets for the event.

DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

An updated report on current progress with the Jubilee was considered.

Letters have been sent out to organisations and businesses.

The History Society had agreed to organise a display which principally represented the last 60 years and local organisations would be asked to participate. This will be held from June 2 to 4 at the Memorial Hall.

Progress was being made with the Loyal Address. Schools had provided some wonderful drawings to adorn the edges of the sheets.

It was hoped to co-ordinate celebrations on June 4 with the Diamond Inn on Coates Green. This would include lighting of a Beacon on top of St Mary's Church and fireworks.

A draft programme was being formulated which would be published on the website when complete.

Arrangements were in hand for bunting along Main Street and at Broadway.

A display for the Pele Tower was under consideration.

The Music in the Park event was to be held on Sunday July 8 and would involve all five Ponteland schools.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

A very useful meeting had been held with Stagecoach and a list of issues which caused problems for bus timetables had been produced. The Council will attempt to ensure action is taken to alleviate them. Thanks were expressed to a local resident who had given up a lot of his time to assist with this issue.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Various items had been considered by the Working Party including plans for a commemorative bed on Coates Green for the Jubilee and various other proposals relating to Northumbria in Bloom. The Spring Judging for Northumbria in Bloom was to be held on Monday April 16 at 2pm.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Armstrong reported that the Ponteland Leisure Centre would be free to users April 7 and 8 and that the temperature of the pool had been improved. *See advert on page 7.*

A letter had been received from the Deputy Chief Executive at NCC relating to a meeting she had attended with Town Councillors and Ponteland Community Partnership relating to regeneration of Merton Way. An update was being sought.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor had attended several functions on behalf of the Council. He had assisted at a litter pick organised by the Youth Service and

young people on February 15. He had been pleased to attend the first get together with businesses at the Diamond Inn on February 23 which had been well attended. The Fairtrade Concert at St Mary's Church on February 25 had been enjoyable and he had been presented with the certification that Ponteland was now a Fairtrade town. He had also attended the Fairtrade Big Brew on March 3.

REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Butler gave a report on a joint meeting of Parish and Town Councils with the County Council on March 13. This had been very informative and had dealt with issues such as the new Code of Conduct, transfer of assets from NCC to Parish and Town Councils and Neighbourhood Plans. Councillor Rawlings gave an update on the work of the new Management and Operational Committees at Merton Hall and the changes and improvements they were making to the facility.

OXBOW LAKE – BOARDWALK PROJECT

The Friends of Ponteland Park have been successful in obtaining a grant for works to erect a boardwalk at the Oxbow Lake. The Town Council agreed to these works and thanked the Friends for all of their efforts in obtaining these funds. There were some issues relating to insurance and warranty liabilities which had now been dealt with to the satisfaction of the Friends and the Council and a letter of agreement for the works to go ahead has been sent to them. The Town Council noted and approved the agreement as submitted.

ANNUAL MEETING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORS

The Annual Meeting of Local Government Electors will be held on Wednesday April 11 at the United Reformed Church, Broadway at 7pm.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council's meeting held on March 14.

What a result! £150,000 investment secured for Ponteland's playing pitches

Football and rugby teams in Ponteland are to get new training and match pitches after a £150,000 investment was secured with the help of four local county councillors.

Sport England announced on March 21 it had awarded a further £50,000 for football facilities in the village, following a 50K grant to the rugby club last year.

The National Lottery funding, which guarantees the future of the pitches for decades, comes from the latest round of Sport England's Protecting Playing Fields Olympic legacy fund.

Ponteland county councillors Richard Dodd, Peter Jackson, Veronica Jones and Eileen Armstrong kickstarted the fundraising last year by each donating £10,000 of their £15,000 annual capital allowance.

This £40,000 grant enabled the successful bid for the £100,000 from Sport England, with the remainder coming from The Football Foundation and Banks Community Fund.

Northumberland County Council will use the funding to develop the playing pitches at Ponteland Leisure Centre. Currently, the site is on an undulating slope and suffers

from poor drainage, which often makes the pitches unplayable during the winter months.

The council will upgrade the existing adult pitch and create a new mini-football pitch and a junior pitch, allowing for more teams to use the site. The rugby teams will also have a new training pitch and match pitch – the first groundwork undertaken on the site since the leisure centre was built in the 1960s.

The council has released land to the east of the leisure centre, which is managed by Leisure Connection, for the new training pitches, which will be protected and maintained for at least 25 years.

Northumberland County Councillor Neil Bradbury, executive member responsible for leisure said: "This is fantastic news for the clubs and the area. This project has been on the table for some time and there has been a lot of planning going on behind the scenes.

"It is great that we are now in a position to start work on the site and over the coming months the county council will be working closely with the clubs and Leisure Connection to see the project come to fruition."

Alan Birkinshaw, Joint Chair of Ponteland United FC, added: "Sport in Ponteland is thriving and the football club in particular has been seeking an increase in the number and quality of playing pitches to meet the demands of the club's overall membership.

"We run 28 teams through all the age groups involving some 300 players and upgrading and increasing the number of pitches will provide greater flexibility for the club to enable more teams to play more matches in the different formats that now prevail.

"At last we shall see some capital investment in Ponteland and I would like to thank all contributors who have helped with this project."

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MP welcomes partial victory on green belt development

1,000 less homes to be built on open space around Ponteland

Ponteland MP Guy Opperman has welcomed a partial U-turn by Newcastle City Council, cutting the number of houses it plans to build on the village's surrounding green belt.

The Council was proposing to build 6,500 of the 21,000 new homes it says are required to meet projected population growth in the city on the open space near Ponteland.

The area affected, named Callerton Park, is between the A69 and A696 near Callerton, Woolsington, Walbottle and Throckley.

But the authority has cut this green belt development by 1,000 homes following a three month public consultation which saw nearly 15,000 submissions received from

5,000 residents and 156 organisations.

A £25m package of measures over the next five years will instead mean more and better homes in the city to meet the crisis in family housing, and will help to reduce the number of homes that need to be built in the green belt.

Mr Opperman responded to the announcement. He said: "There is some good news here for our campaign. The amount of green belt housing will be reduced. Despite telling us they had to go ahead with the plans, they have now agreed to cut the number of houses planned for the Ponteland green belt by 1,000.

"I would like to see no building on the precious green belt but it's a step in the right direction."

Councillor Henri Murison, the city council's Cabinet Member for Quality of Life, said: "These proposals will help bring

more empty homes back into use and deliver significant immediate progress on affordable homes, helping hard working families now and in the future.

"Our plans represent a major shift in council priority towards fair homes for all, as well as seeking to reduce as far as possible any future development on the green belt and instead rely on brownfield development as much as possible."

Mr Opperman was unimpressed: "They have now accepted our argument that they can make better use of brownfield sites and empty homes in the city. Our campaign isn't over and I will continue to fight to protect our green belt."

For more information on the housing plans, visit:

www.newcastle.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/planning/consultation-newcastle-gateshead-core-strategy-and-urban-core-area-a



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



The Memorial Hall appeal, weekend car parking problems and barking dogs all feature in this month's letters...

If an old pit village can fund a Memorial Hall surely we can?

The last issue of PN&V (No. 78) contains a piece about the Diamond Jubilee and also an appeal for the Memorial Hall.

Have you ever been to the Memorial Hall at New Hartley? I have, and it's beautiful; not quite as big as ours but in excellent repair and obviously cherished by its local community.

How come that a small village mostly noted for its 19th Century pit disaster can support such a flourishing facility better than we can? The population of Ponteland is not conspicuously hard-up – as the impressive houses, up-market cars and resident footballers can testify – but our Hall is in the doldrums.

We have some way to go before we can match the civic dedication of New Hartley.

I would urge all who can do so to support our local Memorial Hall while it is still more or less standing. We in the Civic Society have decided that we will mark the Jubilee by making a donation, of as much as we can reasonably afford, towards this vital local facility and would urge all in Ponteland to consider doing the same.

Philip Ham

Chairman, Ponteland Civic Society.

Sensible solution needed to resolve weekend parking issue

The issue of parking at weekends is a 'hot' topic in this area.

Coming up with a sensible working solution should not be beyond the wit of the 'powers that be' and something we should all work towards.

Otherwise the solution could be very expensive (extension of the double yellow lines, parking permits and wardens issuing notices).

I refer to those using the leisure centre for parking but NOT using the facilities. I have not named

and shamed them but the main culprits are a cycling club (not sure if they are registered or not) who park there and spend the day cycling round Northumberland; members attending local church services and those who prefer to park in Ponteland and go into town by bus! I may add that another favourite parking spot for the townies is at the golf club!

A lot of the residents round here are elderly but active and they worry about getting in and out of the estate; heavy traffic at weekends increases their anxiety levels. They worry whether an ambulance/fire appliance could get up the street.

Hope you can oblige with printing the article. We need to solve this problem before an accident occurs; giving it a public airing will start the ball rolling.

Your magazine is well presented, informative and deals effectively in highlighting local issues, so covering this problem is an ideal first step towards resolution of this problematic subject.

Norman Macfarlane

*Fairney Edge
Ponteland*

Please stop the early morning dog barking

Now that spring is here and hopefully warmer mornings when we can sleep with a window open, can I appeal to the dog owners of Darras not to allow their dogs to bark in the early morning?

As a late-shift worker it is particularly infuriating to be wakened at 7.15am (as this morning) when I could benefit from another hour or so of sleep.

Incidentally, having spent the last 30 years living all over the UK, Darras Hall is without doubt the worst (albeit the most affluent) place for barking dogs that we have lived.

Elizabeth Baker

*Langton Court
Darras Hall*

Thank you for trying to save my cat

I would like to say a big 'thank you' to the kind lady who did all that she could for our injured cat.

In mid-February, our rescue cat Jemima was involved in a collision with a car on Darras Road. A lady motorist who witnessed this stopped and picked our cat up from the side of the road and rushed her down to the vets in Ponteland for attention.

Sadly, our cat's life could not be saved. In some way, the trouble that the lady took for a poor injured animal has helped us come to terms with the sad loss of our lovely pet. Very many thanks.

Barbara Riddell

*Darras Road
Ponteland*

Canvassers should not be knocking on doors at night

Am I getting irritable in my old age or do any other residents on the estate have the same concerns as myself?

I am a lady in her mid seventies living alone so I was very apprehensive when last week a canvasser rang the doorbell at nine o'clock at night in complete darkness. I was very worried and nervous so did not open the door, and just shoed her away.

In hindsight I should have asked her who she was working for so I could complain and request that they call at an appropriate time.

This unsociable practice should be discouraged as I am sure there are many other older residents in the 'same boat' as myself and knowing the dangers of opening the door to strangers was up most in my mind.

Any suggestions on what to do if this happens again?

Name and address withheld by consent

Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views but the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters for legal or other reasons. All letters submitted should include the writer's name and address.

May issue deadlines: The May issue will be delivered on May 1 and 2. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday April 16. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the May issue.

What's on...

April at Merton Hall

Open Monday to Saturday for tea and coffee. We will be open Good Friday for tea and coffee from 9.30am – 11.15am when the Country Market will run from 9am – 11.15am. Our next away day will be to Carlisle from 10am – 4pm on April 12. Our AGM is on April 24 at 2pm. Please contact Merton Hall for further information on (01661) 872917 or 07757 952759.

Ponteland's weekly market

Ponteland's weekly market at Merton Way shopping centre is on between 9am and 4pm each Friday.

Northumberland

Fuchsia Society

Our next meeting is on Thursday April 5 from 7.30pm at St. Matthew's RC Church Hall, Ponteland.

Ponteland History Society Help Desk

Are you doing a school project, researching family history, needing historical information on a date, building or person in the Ponteland area, or looking for an old local photograph? Then perhaps we can help. Our free help desk is open at Ponteland Library from 2.15pm to 5pm on Friday April 6, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html

County Council surgeries

Your local Northumberland County Councillors Richard Dodd, Peter Jackson, Veronica Jones and Eileen Armstrong are available to meet constituents on the first Saturday of every month from 10am-11am at Waitrose supermarket, Ponteland. Their next surgery is on April 7.

Ponteland WI

Ponteland WI will be meeting in the Coffee Lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall on Tuesday April 10 at 7pm. This

month's speaker will be Eunice Craig on Colour and Image Presentation - Stylish Wardrobe. Visitors/potential new members would be most welcome.

Ponteland Lions AGM

Wednesday April 11 from 7.30pm - 9pm at Ponteland Golf Club.

Darras Hall WI

Darras Hall WI invite you to their meeting on Thursday April 12 in the URC Hall, Broadway, Darras Hall. The afternoon starts at 2pm and the speaker for this month is Mr Geoff Hughes who will be talking about the 'Pleasures of Gibside'. The competition is entitled 'A National Trust Photograph'. Visitors are most welcome.

Ponteland WI

coffee morning

Ponteland WI will also be holding a fundraising coffee morning on Saturday April 14 from 10am-11.30am in St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. There will be a tombola, raffle and various stalls including cakes/preserves, books, bric-a-brac and plants. Coffee/tea accompanied by delicious home made scones. Please join us for a relaxed coffee break and don't forget to bring your friends!

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our Speaker on Monday April 16 is Mr Peter Tracy on 'East, West & Central' which covers his experience with orphanages in Central Europe. The speaker on May 14 is Professor John Derry 'Petain - The Pessimistic Patriot' and this is also our Annual General Meeting. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm. Membership is open to gentlemen aged over 55 who are not in full time employment. The annual subscription is £10. For further details contact Donald Lloyd on (01661) 872661 or at donaldfloyd@sky.com

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our speaker on Monday April 16 will be Pam Eveleigh. She will share beautiful images of native plants from her home Province: Alberta, Canada. The emphasis will be on showy species suitable for the rock garden from the prairie, foothill and mountain regions. She is a founding member of the Calgary Rock and Alpine Garden Society. In addition to being an avid hiker, alpine gardener, and Primula specialist, her interests are in macro and floral photography. To get a sense of the vibrant images you will see in her lecture, visit her websites www.primulaworld.com and www.eveleigh.biz (she will also be this year's SRGC travelling speaker). Our meetings take place in St Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road Ponteland. The doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal on (0191) 413 2574 or at t.teal@btinternet.com

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Tuesday April 17 from 7.30pm – 8.30pm at the Memorial Hall.

Friends of Ponteland Park Annual General Meeting

Friends of Ponteland Park Annual General Meeting will be held in Merton Hall on Thursday April 26 at 7pm. Nominations (with nominee's signed agreement) for the Committee to be received by Secretary, 51 Eland Edge, Ponteland NE20 9AY by Monday April 16. This will be followed by Frank Harrington who will speak on the history of the formation of Ponteland Park. All welcome.

Ponteland Repertory Society

Ponteland Repertory Society presents 'Blood Brothers', the iconic Willy Russell play about twin boys separated at birth. On stage in Ponteland Memorial Hall from Wednesday April 25 to Saturday April 28 at 7pm and at 2pm for the Saturday matinee. Tickets costing £8 adults/£6 U16 are available now from Alan Newton, the Butcher's shop, Merton Way, Ponteland, tel: (01661) 822985. See preview on p18.

Ponteland United Reformed Church Spring Fayre

Friday April 27 from 11am-3pm and Saturday April 28 from 10am-12noon in the church on Broadway, Darras Hall. Our stalls this year include a sundry/pantry & gift stall with linens. Bargains galore for everyone, our usual stalls include home bakery, bric-a-brac, books, pictures, cds and videos, gardening, selection of nearly new clothes, and many other attractions. The coffee shop will be open. The church will be open on Tuesday April 24 for good quality clothing. Contributions for the above event most welcome. Donations to any of the other stalls April 24 to 26 at the church or for collection from Les Donald on (01661) 872728.

Ponteland Civic Society

The next Ponteland Civic Society meeting will be on Monday April 30 in St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm. Dr Liz O'Donnell will speak on 'Voices of Northumberland' with recordings made for the County Record Office at Woodhorn describing Northumbrian lives, including one relating to Ponteland. Visitors welcome, for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

Darras Hall First School Annual Summer Fair

Darras Hall First School will be holding its annual Summer Fair on Saturday May 19 from 1pm-4pm.

Ponteland Netball

Did you used to play netball or are you new to the game? Come and join us for a fun and sociable workout. All levels welcome. Every Monday 8pm-9pm term time in the sports hall behind Ponteland Middle School. Contact Jane at pontnetball@gmail.com or on 07867 483551.

See page 12 for the full list of Easter church services.

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		8.00 9.00pm 6.45 7.45pm 6.45 7.45pm

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DANNY on 07921 910 113 for details £4.00 Lets dance ☺

Procession to start Holy Week

By The Reverend Peter Barham, Vicar of Ponteland

At St Mary's we start at 10am on Palm Sunday April 1 with a procession from Richard Coates School with Jazz the donkey.

We will walk up Thornhill Road to church, remembering Jesus's entry into Jerusalem at the start of Holy Week. During the week there is a service every evening at 7pm - Compline is the late night service of the

monasteries - half an hour of peace and quiet.

On Maundy Thursday we remember the Last Supper, and on Good Friday the Cross will be raised on the Green. Easter Sunday is a day of celebration, and the main service in St Mary's is at 10am.

St Mary's Organ is now fresh, clean and wholesome. Lightbown the organ builder has removed all 700 pipes and cleaned

away 40 years of dirt. Then they managed to put all the pipes back in the right place!

On Sunday April 29 at 6.30pm we will celebrate with a short Songs of Praise, some music by the choir, and several pieces played by Shaun Turnbull (our organist) which will, no doubt, show how good the organ is now sounding. All are invited to this very special celebration - and a huge 'thanks' to everyone who helped pay for the work.



Palm Sunday 2011



Good Friday 2010

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN PONTELAND

United Reformed Church, Broadway

Wednesday 4 April Passover Service	7.00 pm
Good Friday 6 April	10.00 am
Easter Sunday 8 April	10.00 am

Methodist Church, Milbourn

Palm Sunday 1 April	6.30 pm
Good Friday 6 April	7.00 pm
Easter Day 8 April	6.30 pm

St Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

Palm Sunday 1 April Holy Communion	8.00 am
Procession starts at Richard Coates School and proceeds down Thornhill Road to Church (if you cannot walk come to Church at 10.00 am)	10.00 am
Mon 2-Sat 7 April Compline and Address	7.00 pm
Compline is the late night service of the monasteries, half an hour of peace and quiet	
Maundy Thursday 5 April Choral Communion	7.00 pm
then a Vigil until Compline	9.00 pm
Good Friday 6 April Morning Service	10.30 am
Penguins Children's club meet	11.30 am-12.30 pm
Afternoon Vigil	1.30-3.00 pm
Easter Sunday 8 April Holy Communion	8.00 am
Festal Communion	10.00 am
Evening Service	6.30 pm

Methodist Church, Ponteland

Palm Sunday 1 April Palm Cross Sharing	10.00 am
Churches Together Service	6.30 pm
Monday 2 April Holy Week Reflection	7.30 pm
Maundy Thursday Upper Room Communion	7.30 pm
Good Friday 6 April Morning Service	10.00 am
Circuit Choir sings 'Crucifixion' at Westerhope	6.00 pm
Easter Sunday 8 April	
Sunrise Service at Bolam Lake	6.00 am
then breakfast at Church	
Holy Communion	10.00 am
Evening Worship	6.30 pm

St Matthew's R.C. Ponteland

Holy Thursday 5 April Mass	8.00 pm
Good Friday 6 April Passion	4.30 pm
Holy Saturday 7 April Easter Vigil	6.00 pm
Easter Sunday 8 April Mass	10.30 am

Holy Saviour, Milbourn

Palm Sunday 1 April Holy Communion	11.15 am
Easter Sunday 8 April Holy Communion	11.15 am

RAISING OF THE CROSS - GOOD FRIDAY - 11.15 a.m.
VILLAGE GREEN PONTELAND
Refreshments in the Methodist Hall after the service

Ponteland wins Fairtrade town status

Ponteland has been declared a Fairtrade Town!

Mayor Peter Cowey was presented with a certificate from the Fairtrade Foundation by Steve Helm, chairman of the Ponteland Fairtrade Steering Group.

Receiving the award at a packed charity concert featuring the Caedmon Choir in St Mary's Church to launch Fairtrade Fortnight, Coun Cowey thanked the steering group for their work during the last two years in persuading the people of Ponteland to buy Fairtrade goods.

Mr Helm said thanks were due to the people of Ponteland who supported Fairtrade and bought Fairtrade goods in Ponteland from many sources. They included shops like The Cooperative, Sainsburys, Waitrose, the DeliCafe and Dobbies Food Hall, and also Traidcraft stalls in the four churches.

Residents also drank Fairtrade tea and coffee in Dobbies Garden Centre Café and the DeliCafe and in the Exchange Café in the Diamond Inn, he said.

In addition several local community groups like U3A, Ponteland Photographic Society and Ponteland Bowling Club had changed to Fairtrade drinks at meetings. Ponteland schools have also supported Fairtrade and Ponteland Community High School became a Fairtrade school two weeks



Ponteland Mayor Peter Cowey and Mayoress Sheila Cowey receive the Fairtrade Town certificate from Steve Helm. Photo by Keith Robertson.

ago. Northumbria Police Headquarters in Ponteland also serve Fairtrade tea and coffee in their staff canteen.

All this support and the backing of the Town Council have led to Ponteland being granted Fairtrade Town Status, which is awarded for 12 months and reviewed annually.

In order to retain it we must continue to support Fairtrade in Ponteland and try to increase the range of shops, cafes and

pubs selling an increasing number of Fairtrade products.

Fairtrade Fortnight was celebrated in Ponteland with the Charity Concert followed by three 'Big Brew' events in the churches, where Fairtrade tea, coffee and cakes were served and Fairtrade products sold. The events raised a combined total of over £1000 for the Fairtrade development charity Traidcraft Exchange.

New head appointed for High School

A new headteacher has been appointed at Ponteland Community High School to replace Stephen Prandle, who retires this summer.

Kieran McGrane, currently Principal at Bedlingtonshire Community High School in Northumberland, arrives in September.

Mr Prandle, pictured, has been teaching since 1975, the past 20 years as a headteacher, and previously worked in his native Merseyside, Cleveland and Seaton Burn.

Under his stewardship Ponteland has enjoyed superb academic achievement and an envious reputation for excellence. Mr Prandle, 59, is among around only 20 heads in the country working as an associate with the

National College for School Leadership to nurture the next generation of school leaders.

Another huge challenge has been a recent health setback which has seen him receiving chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment for blood cancer non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a gruelling regime which forced time off before returning to the school in January 2011.

Chair of governors Mike Brown paid tribute: "Governors are pleased with their appointment of Mr McGrane, who will join the school at the start of the autumn term.

"We would also wish to thank Mr Prandle for his considerable contribution to the high standards and positive learning climate of the school. He has developed strong staff and management teams. We will be wishing him a long and happy retirement from September."



Hundreds object to Ponteland boundary changes

Controversial proposals to split Ponteland and move over 3,500 homes into a new Berwick parliamentary constituency have provoked nearly 1,000 objections.

Under the plans, over 3,600 electors in Ponteland East would be represented by a Berwick & Morpeth MP and over 10,000 in Ponteland North, Ponteland South with Heddon and Ponteland West still with a Hexham MP.

But the proposals have raised a storm of protest and 950 representations to the Commission. All three main political parties have united in their condemnation, with the 950 submissions over Hexham the equal of all the other 28 North East constituencies put together.

In addition, 21 parish councils have objected to the plans for Tynedale, with only Prudhoe Town Council giving support to the Boundary Commission.

Conservatives have drawn up counter-proposals and are claiming the support of Liberal Democrat and Labour colleagues.

They call for the retention of Ponteland East in the Hexham seat along with the rest of Ponteland, and Rothbury being put back into Berwick upon Tweed. They also want Haltwhistle and South Tynedale retained in Hexham, with Chopwell and Rowlands Gill transferred to the Consett and Barnard Castle seat.

Ponteland East county councillor Eileen Armstrong is among supporters of the counter-proposal.

The Boundary Commission says it has been constrained in drawing up the changes by a need for every constituency to have an electorate between 72,810 and 80,473.

It will publish revised proposals later this year, with finalised plans being submitted to Parliament for approval by October 2013. They will take full effect in the next general election of 2015 if they are not challenged.

Hexham MP Guy Opperman said: "I hope the Commission listens to the people of Tynedale. While I accept that our constituency will need to expand, it is crucial we keep Northumberland whole."

CHARITY CEILIDH RAISES RECORD TOTAL

Thanks to all the local supporters of the annual fundraising ceilidh for the Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team on Saturday February 11 at the Memorial Hall.

It was packed out - total sellout! You raised the best total ever £1,800, a fantastic effort.

The team relies totally on donations as a Charity and as the team's running costs are over £15,000 per year so this helps tremendously.

The Whistling Sheep and the dancers were all in good form!





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Ponteland Golf Club

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Golf North East, 2008

Both playing & social memberships are currently being offered at Ponteland Golf Club. Membership categories start from the age of 10 and there is a range of payment options currently available for both ladies and gentlemen. There is currently no waiting list for ANY category. To discuss the available options and fees, or for further general information, please contact:

Secretary Greg Waugh at:
secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk
Tel: 01661 822689





Aztec day brings history lesson to life

Children enjoyed a taste of Ancient Mexico in a history lesson with a difference at Richard Coates Middle School.

Year 5 pupils took part in an Aztec day when they enjoyed crafts, games, music making and dance.

Teacher Christine Cowan said: "The children had all created their own Aztec mask in art lessons, which they wore on the day, together with a costume. Some

came dressed as Eagle warriors or noblemen, while others were merchants or slaves.

"The event ended in an Aztec feast where the pupils ate the typical Mexican food they had made earlier in the day."



Appeal after bike thieves commit eight burglaries in a night

By PC Paul Henery
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



Total Policing

There have been a total of 18 crimes reported in the Ponteland area in the period from February 16 to March 18.

They break down as follows:

- eight burglaries (non dwelling)
- two burglaries (dwelling)
- five thefts (including three shoplifting)
- one assault
- one sexual offence
- one criminal damage (motor vehicle).

There have been eight arrests in relation to these offences and further enquiries are

ongoing which may lead to further arrests.

The police surgeries for the next month are:

Saturday April 21 at 9.30am at Merton Hall with CSO Ruddick

Saturday April 28 at 11.30am at Belsay shop with PC Davison.

The next Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) meeting will be held on Tuesday April 17 at 9.30am at the East Centre, Prudhoe.

Once again Ponteland was targeted by thieves on one night, between March 23

and 24.

This resulted in a total eight burglaries where pedal cycles seemed to be the target.

Extensive forensic and door to door enquires are still ongoing but we believe someone may have seen either suspicious persons or vehicles on that night.

We would appeal for anyone with any information about the persons responsible for these offences, or if anyone saw anything that night to ring either the Police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

2012 Review

By Brian Prickett

Chairman, Ponteland Community Partnership



The Partnership was set up in 2004 in accordance with the requirements of the 2001 Local Government Act, and comprises the following sub-groups:

- **Regeneration**
- **Transport**
- **Young People**
- **Environment**
- **Friends of Ponteland Park**
- **Pont News & Views.**

The Regeneration Group produced the Design Brief for the regeneration project with assistance of a local government officer, and is represented on the current NCC Project Group.

The Transport Group attends meetings with ADAPT & the WRVS to try and improve Transport links for the Community, such as Dial-a-Ride and Getabout Northumberland.

The Young Peoples Group raised money to improve the Play Park on Callerton Lane also the building of the New Youth Centre and is now aiming for a Skateboard Park and funding for football activities.

The Environment Group works towards improving the Environment in Ponteland, in conjunction with the Town Council.

As an associated group Friends of Ponteland Park regularly reports progress of their activities and concerns within the park and Ponteland.

Pont News & Views magazine is delivered to all residents in the district of Ponteland keeping you all updated with events and articles of interest.

PCP acts as a facilitator, supporting funding applications amounting to many tens of thousands of pounds for local community groups. All of the above is carried out by volunteers who work in close contact with Ponteland Town Council, the

Police, youth leaders, schools and the County Council.

We are very proud of all PCP's achievements and appreciate the efforts put in by all our members. As you can imagine, a lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes.

Do you think you could help?

Why not come and meet PCP members to discuss any issues or ideas you may have at one of their meetings usually held on the 3rd Wednesday in the month from 7pm in Merton Hall. We are always looking for new blood and new ideas on how to improve Ponteland and District.

AGM

This year's AGM will be held on Wednesday May 23 at 7pm in Merton Hall. All are welcome.

FIRST AID CLASSES IN PONTELAND

- **Interested in First Aid ?**
- **Need A Qualification ?**
- **Have a Weekday Free ?**

First Call Training are running low cost Emergency First Aid courses throughout the coming months in Ponteland and surrounding areas.

All classes are delivered by fully qualified trainers accredited with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and the HSE. This 1 day course is ideal for individuals with an interest in first aid or business owners who require staff to be trained to comply with legal responsibilities.

To book a place or to find out more please contact:-

Malcolm Tindle
mobile: 07963 - 675753
or email: support@firstcalltraining.com

*** courses can also be delivered 'in house' if required**

Sally on squirrel awards shortlist

A Ponteland woman's dedication to red squirrel conservation could be recognised with a national accolade.



A new UK-wide awards scheme has been launched by the Red Squirrel Survival Trust (RSST) to honour the achievements of the many volunteers who give up their time to protect the animal.

And Sally Hardy, the co-ordinator of Ponteland Red Squirrels, has made the shortlist.

The group works to maintain and increase the population of reds in the Ponteland and Darras Hall areas, as well as raise awareness of the fact that without support and preservation measures, numbers will drop through destruction of habitat and catching the squirrelpox virus from grey squirrels.

She is also a leading force for Northern Red Squirrels (NRS), an umbrella organisation created to unite independent voluntary groups and individuals.

Mrs Hardy said: "It's very nice to be on the shortlist and this reflects well on everyone involved with Ponteland Red Squirrels and Northern Red Squirrels. I'm pleased that red squirrel volunteers are being recognised at a national level."

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Have you ever heard the story of the Johnstone brothers?



By Gill Thompson
Chairman, Ponteland Repertory Society

Ponteland Repertory Society are performing the original play Blood Brothers in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland from Wednesday April 25 until Saturday April 28.

This iconic play written by Willy Russell, and first performed in 1986, tells the bittersweet life stories of twin brothers separated at birth.

One twin, Mickey, played by Gavin Redhead remains with his poor, working class birth family. The other twin, Eddie, played by Joe McGlaughlin is brought up in a well off middle class family.

Eddie's mother Mrs Lyons is mentally unstable, becoming more and more paranoid as the story progresses. Kathryn Hayes plays Mrs Lyons, Heather Thompson is Mrs Johnstone, the superstitious put upon but loving mother of a large unruly family.

Although coerced by Mrs Lyons into giving away one of her babies Mrs Johnstone never forgets Eddie. Linda, played by Emma McEnaney, is a childhood friend of both Mickey and Eddie, and both twins eventually fall in love with her.

Cameo roles are taken by Janice Jobson as the policewoman, and by Neil Rutter who in quick succession is a milkman and

a gynaecologist. "The Kids" are played by Charlotte Stone, Olivia Smith and Sophie and Beth MacKenzie.

Over the whole scene looms the presence of The Narrator, played by Brenda Rutter, aware from the beginning of the outcome of the tale, the Narrator watches sardonically from the sidelines as the story unfolds.

Tickets for the show, price £8.00 adults £6.00 U16, are on sale now and can be obtained from Alan Newton, the Butcher's shop, Merton Way, Ponteland. There will be a matinee performance on Saturday at 2pm and all evening performances start at 7pm.

Waitrose throws party for Ponteland charity beneficiaries

More than 30 local charities who have benefited from donations from Waitrose were treated to a party at the Memorial Hall.

Performing traditional Zulu song and dance to a captivated audience, the Lions of Zululand – a touring youth dance group from Kwazulu Natal in South Africa whose UK base is in Newcastle – were just one of the charities chosen by the Ponteland store's customers to benefit from over £12,000 worth of donations last year from its Community Matters scheme.

Other beneficiaries represented on the day included Toma fund – a charity supporting children with cancer, Dogs for Deaf, Friends of Marie Curie, Children North East, Ponteland Red Squirrels, Dyslexia North East, Ponteland Inner Wheel and the Dinnington Scouts Group.

Waitrose section manager and event organiser Alan Allsopp said: "We wanted to honour the fantastic work that all these charities do within the community and say thank you for the time and commitment the individual workers put into these worthwhile causes.

"This is the first time we've held this event but hope to make it an annual celebration of all the local charities we support, which will help us build strong relationships and lasting ties."

Ann Wellis, from the Friends of Marie Curie Newcastle, added: "The money received from Waitrose went towards the much needed purchase of a bladder scanner. It's great that through



businesses like Waitrose local people can choose and support charities that they know will benefit people living in the area."

The Community Matters Scheme was launched nationally in 2008 and allows local Waitrose customers to nominate a charity or organisation to be voted for in store by customers with green tokens received at the checkout with every purchase. Three different charities are highlighted each month with all three receiving a share of £1,000 – divided up based on the number of 'green token' votes received.

Jessica dispenses prescription for success

A Ponteland pharmacy is expanding – just a year after being taken over by its former Saturday girl.

Taylor's Pharmacy on Brewery Lane is now run by Jessica Taylor, who worked for previous owners Peter and Pam Hopley at weekends when she was a student at the High School.

Jessica arrived with bags of ideas on how to further improve and expand the services offered and her early success has required an expansion of the pharmacy into a former dental surgery upstairs.

There is now a modern, well equipped first floor with a dispensing area, storage space and a new staff room and office area, enabling staff to meet the increased demand for the preparation of prescriptions for delivery to patients.

Jessica said: "Since I started we have tripled the amount of community dosette trays we put up and deliver weekly. Neither the pokey and dingy upstairs area nor our downstairs dispensary were sufficient for storage and for dispensing trays.

"Now we have a luxury modern upstairs

area with a dispensing area, storage space and a new staff room and office. It's very sleek and modern and we are so pleased we have even been taking our patients upstairs to show them."

Other new services launched include supplying farms with prescriptions for their animals and processing prescriptions for family pets, saving owners from expensive veterinary costs.

Jessica has also invested in a delivery vehicle to meet the everyday demand for deliveries all around Ponteland, Darras Hall, Dinnington, Woosington and surrounding areas.

She added: "We have gone from strength to strength so I am over the moon with my first year and hope it can continue."

To find out more about delivery of prescriptions, veterinary products or any other services provided by the pharmacy call (01661) 822055.



The new upstairs extension at Taylor's Pharmacy



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