

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Decision due on Green
Belt homes

Bistro scheme rejected for
second time

Affordable housing cut in
new police HQ plans

Yo ho ho!

The show of shows



What's on!

Kirkley Krifters

Monday 13th February, 10am-4pm
Get up-close and personal with amazing megabugs that creep and crawl. See giant tarantulas, frogs, geckos, spiders, beetles and more.

Pirates & Princesses Day

Wednesday 15th February, 10am-4pm
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Junior Zoo School & Zoo School

Saturday 18th February (Junior)
Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th February
This programme is a must for any animal enthusiasts out there. The junior zoo school is open for children aged 6-8 and costs £30.00 for the day. The zoo school is open for children aged 9-15 and is a two day event costing £50.00. Both programmes include lunch and a free t-shirt. Please note places are limited so book early to avoid disappointment.

For more details on any of the events or to book please email zoo@kirkleyhall.co.uk
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Show of shows to raise cash for cancer charities

Children from a Ponteland dance school will be performing everything from Cats to 101 Dalmatians in a special show to raise funds for cancer charities.

All 160 members of the Jill Errington School of Dance and Drama will take part in the 'page turning' adventure through different stories also including Cat in the Hat, Oliver Twist, James Bond, Watership Down, Wizard of Oz, Twilight, Cops and Robbers, Peter Pan, Princesses, Arabian Nights and Treasure Island.

Proceeds are going to Cancer Research UK, the Breast Cancer Campaign and Legacare and organisers hope to raise up to £2,500.

Fundraising for costumes has seen donations from Opalcs IT support, Heathlands Gym, Advanced Engineering Solutions and Benfield. A fundraising meal is also planned at the New Rendezvous restaurant on February 20.

The school has been running for 20 years and has pupils aged between two and 18 years who attend classes at the United

Reformed Church in Darras Hall and Coates Middle School in Ponteland.

The youngsters take part in shows and take exams in R.A.D. Ballet, I.S.T.D. modern and Jazz. Boys' street dance class 'Solid Lazer Crew' is a recent addition.

The shows are being held at the People's Theatre in Heaton, Newcastle, on Saturday March 24 at 2pm and 6pm. Tickets cost £7 each and are available from the URC on Broadway, Darras Hall, on a Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon.

Photos by Alan Errington.



What's a Railcard?
By Alastair Ruffman

Full steam ahead for Library exhibition

By Denise Weatherburn

Stunning pictures from a recent Ponteland Photographic Society competition are on display in Ponteland Library until mid March.

More than 60 entries from members were independently judged by photography expert Jim Welsh, who praised the high quality and variety of prints produced.

PPS meetings are held every Monday at 7.30pm in Merton Hall. The club has a varied syllabus that includes guest speakers, tutorial evenings and a large variety of competitions to keep everyone busy.

Additionally, a monthly newsletter is provided to members that gives lots of articles about photography and techniques. There are also outings during

the year for those keen to develop their photography skills.

If you're interested in photography why not pop along and see what's going on and join us. It doesn't matter about experience or camera and you can come along to your first couple of sessions without joining to see if it's for you. If you need any further information please email pontps@hotmail.com



Christine on the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

MARATHON EFFORT FROM CHRISTINE FOR CANCER CHARITY

A building society worker raised more than £2,500 for Macmillan Cancer Support after completing the New York Marathon.

Christine Heslop, from Ponteland, ran the New York Marathon on behalf of her employer Newcastle Building Society and completed the 26.2 mile course in aid of the Society's Charity of the Year.

Christine, who has worked for the Society for more than 10 years as a Head of Marketing Communications, held a range of fundraising events including a coffee morning in the Diamond Inn, Ponteland, and a raffle in which most of the local businesses donated prizes including The Princess Garden, Fratellis, Sainsburys, Waitrose, Level 2 and Westerhope Golf Club to help her achieve her fundraising target.



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BUDGET 2012-13

A draft budget for 2012-13 had been circulated to councillors for comment and approval. The budget represents an increase of 3.6% on the current year, which mainly related to the transfer of responsibility for the public conveniences on Thornhill Road from Northumberland County Council and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The increase represents an approximate increase of just over £2 on a band D property per annum. The Town Council unanimously accepted the budget and agreed to levy a precept of £348,347 on the County Council.

PROJECTS REPORT

Reports on the West Road easy entrance project and the car parking area at Fox Covert Lane will be submitted to the February meeting. Revised plans for the Memorial Hall project have been received and Councillors were asked to view these and select their preferred option. Additional time for quotes in respect of the bridge redesign had been approved and a report will be submitted to a future Council meeting. There was a potential problem with the soft engineering works proposed on the river bank. The Environment Agency had raised some concerns and it was suggested that a meeting should be held with them to discuss them in more detail. In relation to the street information signs, it was suggested that a double sided sign was required at Broadway which would cost an additional £1,000. This expenditure was approved. It was reported that prices were being sought for the

remedial work to be carried out on the Coates Green path. It was also reported that a meeting was to be held with the County Council in relation to the new Heads of Terms for the proposed skate park land.

RESIGNATION OF RICHARD HUTCHINSON

The Council had received a letter of resignation from Richard Hutchinson, a former Councillor for the West ward of Ponteland. The resignation was due to work and family commitments. The Council expressed their appreciation for all of the hard work and efforts that Richard had put into his role since his election in June 2009. It was agreed that a letter of thanks be sent to Richard. The Clerk reported that she had, in accordance with regulations, advertised the vacancy and she had been informed that a request for an election had been received by the County Council.

GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Ponteland Cricket Club

The Council approved a grant of £500 to the Cricket Club towards the provision of a new scoreboard in the existing building at Ponteland Leisure Centre.

NORTHUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

Village regeneration scheme

County Councillor Richard Dodd reported that the regeneration proposals were still ongoing and

the Ponteland county councillors would be attending a meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive to discuss this issue. He stated that an announcement had been made at the West Area Committee held on 10 January in relation to a commitment to spend £28m on new libraries across Northumberland.

Community Chest

Councillor Veronica Jones referred to the Community Chest which was coming to the end of the financial year. There had been only one application from Ponteland. There was still some funding left and she urged local organisations to submit applications as soon as possible. The funding would also be available in 2012-13. Organisations in Ponteland were urged to contact the County Council to obtain a form or alternatively visit the website www.northumberland.gov.uk where all the necessary information was available.

Adult Care budget cuts

Coun Jones expressed her concern at the proposed savings in the Adult Care budget. Some £7m of savings had been identified and this required careful monitoring to assess the impact on services.

Shoppers' car park permit

Coun Jones referred to the introduction of a Shoppers Car Park permit which would allow residents of the County to park free in charging car parks at certain off peak hours. Two permits per household would be allowed. There was an annual fee of £15.

Northumberland Snow Squad

A useful document had been received from the County Council in relation to clearing snow and ice. This also included advice from the Government on snow clearance and liabilities. There was also advice for Parish and Town Councils in relation to volunteer snow squads.

Housing Needs Assessment Postal Survey

It was reported that the County Council would be carrying out a housing needs survey as part of their legal requirement to develop housing and planning policies. This was being carried out by DCA, an independent housing research consultancy. The research would be carried out over the next four months and would involve 18,725 postal surveys being delivered to households in Northumberland starting from January 4. The survey could also be completed online.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor attended the following events: Darras Hall Estate Committee Christmas event – Dec 19; Ponteland Town Council Christmas event – Dec 20; Wheelbarrow Race - January 1; Ponteland Community High School Awards Ceremony - January 5.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on January 11.



Ponteland Golf Club

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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



NORTHUMBRIA IN BLOOM – VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Do you have an interest in gardening? Would you be interested in giving some of your time to assist the Town Council with their Northumbria in Bloom entry in this Jubilee year and help us get a Gold award?

The Council is hoping to establish a small group of volunteers to assist with ideas but also some practical work for Northumbria in Bloom. If anyone is interested could they please contact the Clerk to the Council, Mrs K Mavin on (01661) 825092 or email enquiries@pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk

Decision on Green Belt homes plan expected

A decision on whether to proceed with plans for 6,500 new homes on Green Belt land surrounding Ponteland and Darras Hall will be made by Newcastle City Council later this month.

A special cabinet meeting is being held to consider more than 4,000 responses to its joint One Core Strategy with Gateshead Council.

The strategy sets out where more than 30,000 new homes can be built over the next two decades, with proposed locations including a 350-hectare site called Callerton Park between the A69, A1 and A696 near Callerton, Woolsington, Walbottle and Throckley.

A group has been set up called Newcastle West Green Belt Protection Group to fight the plans and its campaign petition with 5,900 signatures was presented to the Lord Mayor at the council's meeting on January 11.

In last month's Pont News we gave Newcastle city councillor Henri Murison, Cabinet Member for Quality of Life, and

opponent Guy Opperman MP platforms to outline their views for and against the plans.

Mr Opperman, Ponteland's MP, said he had had a huge response from Ponteland constituents: "Following our leaflet and the Pont News & Views article on the campaign I have been able to submit hundreds of objections to the ill thought out plans. I want thank you to everyone who has supported our campaign to protect the Green Belt.

"Ridiculously, the consultation process closed on January 4th with no notice to local people, so some residents may not have even had the chance to have their objections counted.

"We are determined to maintain the unique character of Ponteland and Darras Hall - and a big part of that is its rural nature which separates it from West Newcastle. We await to hear this month if they will drop these plans. If they get away with this now, who knows what will be next?"



Other opponents include the Save Gosforth Wildlife Campaign, Save Throckley, Walbottle and Blucher Open Spaces Campaign, Newcastle West Green Belt Protection Campaign, Woolsington Parish Council and Kenton Bank Foot Residents' Association.

The Council says its hands are tied because Government projections indicate the level of

housing required to cater for population growth, while the National Policy Planning Framework has removed the priority given to brownfield sites.

The February cabinet meeting is expected to decide which sites will go forward for further public consultation this summer. This will inform the submission plan which will be subject to a further statutory consultation period before final proposals are submitted to Government in 2013. There will then be a public inquiry before it can be adopted as policy by the Council.

Your letters: Page 10

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Affordable housing to be cut in new Northumbria Police HQ revamp plans

A decision on revised plans for a building scheme designed to help fund the modernisation of Northumbria Police's Ponteland headquarters complex is due later this month.

But the level of affordable housing in the scheme is set to be slashed in a move which could spark objections.

Outline permission for plans to build 150 new homes on part of the site were approved almost three years ago on condition that 50% of the new houses were in the affordable bracket – as well as a £700,000 police contribution towards local road, public transport and traffic improvements.

Now Northumbria Police Authority is seeking to reduce the level of affordable homes to be built to 20% because it claims the scheme is not financially viable otherwise. That means the whole planning application – which includes the 150 houses, a new 12,000sq ft office block and an access road – has to be determined all over again.

An application was due to go before Northumberland County Council's West Area Planning Committee on January 18 with a recommendation to approve but it was withdrawn. Northumbria Police Authority property advisor Peter Udall said the application was now expected to be heard at the committee's February 15 meeting.

Bistro plan rejected for second time

Councillors have rejected controversial plans to open a new bistro in the heart of Ponteland for a second time – against the advice of their own officers.

Northumberland County Council planning officers had recommended approval for the resubmitted plans to turn the former Co-op store and Wine Rack in Bell Villas into a two-storey bar and restaurant.

They said the issues of lack of marketing of the site and loss of retail space which had led to refusal last year – later backed by a Government planning inspector at appeal – had been "comprehensively overcome" following new evidence of advertising activity and the availability of other nearby vacant shops.

But members of the Council's West Area Planning Committee, meeting in Hexham on January 18, rejected the application by six votes to one, saying: "The proposal would result in the loss of existing retail floor space within the Ponteland commercial and business centre for which the applicant has not demonstrated compelling exceptional circumstances."

The plans had generated 19 letters of objection from neighbouring residents from the Ryehaugh Estate and businesses, two petitions signed by 170 people, and objections from Ponteland Town Council, Civic Society and Methodist Church and MP Guy Opperman.



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Kevin and Richard get their teeth into new venture

Two local dentists have announced ambitious expansion plans after taking over a Ponteland practice.

Experienced dental surgeons Kevin Higgins and Richard Winter are the new owners of the surgery on Bell Villas opposite the Sainsbury supermarket, following the retirement of John Hallam after 28 years.

Father-of-three Richard, who had been with the Kingston Park Dental Practice for 12 years, has a special interest in restorative and implant dentistry. Among his previous posts was a spell as lead dentist on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean and a teaching post at Newcastle Dental Hospital.

Kevin, who has been a dentist for 20 years, was latterly with the Darras Hall Dental Practice for seven years. The father-of-one leads on implant and cosmetic dentistry as well as dental sedation and general surgery.

They have inherited a healthy practice with over 600 patients but hope to attract new patients from across the Ponteland area and beyond as part of their plans to expand.

Richard explained: "We are embarking on a major programme of investment to reconfigure the practice, creating a new front entrance, larger open plan waiting room and three surgeries with state-of-the-art facilities. We are also introducing new services including high end restorative dentistry, implants and facial aesthetics."

Both dentists are highly qualified. Richard is tutor for the northern region for the Faculty of General Dental Practice, while Kevin is also actively involved with the training and mentoring of younger dentists.

Wishing the new partners luck, Mr Hallam said his former patients were in safe hands: "I would be happy to endorse the new owners of



Kevin Higgins (left) and Richard Winter

my dental practice. They are well established young practitioners, who have both worked locally for many years.

"They both have good reputations and pleasing characters. I am sure that patients will be well served by the new owners. I wish them the very best of good luck for the future."

You can find out more about the new Higgins and Winter Dental Practice at their website at higginsandwinterdental.com or call the surgery on 01661 872979.

APPEAL AFTER THIEVES TARGET CHURCH

The door into the tower at St Mary's was broken through during the day on Monday January 16, and some money stolen from a cupboard.

If anyone saw anything, or was in church that day and can help us pin down more exactly when it happened, please contact the Vicar Peter Barham on (01661) 822140 or the police.

We will continue to leave the church open during the day, and appreciate the fact that people use it. Please keep an eye on the building, drop in if you're passing, and report anything suspicious.

PONTELAND ROTARY CLUB CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING

Rotary President Bob Crosby presented a cheque for £1,250 to grateful Chairman of Newcastle Save The Children Fund Alison Barton.

The Toy Collection again produced an excellent return of toys distributed to St Cuthbert's Care, Barnardo's, Surestart, Auton House, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and others to benefit over 3,000 children. The Carol Concert raised £325 for Children North East and £250 for Bedlington Salvation Army. The Rotary Club would like to thank all who supported fundraising efforts last year.

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Proposals for the development of land adjacent to The Nursery, Medburn.

The owners of the site adjacent to The Nursery, Medburn, are seeking to apply for outline planning permission to develop the site for 14 Executive Dwellings.

In order to inform the planning application process we would welcome your thoughts and comments on the proposals.

If you would like to know more about these exciting proposals please email medburn@gva.co.uk and we will send out a questionnaire and a copy of the draft proposals for you to comment upon. We would be grateful if you could send us your comments by 17th February 2012.

Thank you for your time and responses in advance.



Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



An appeal to resist Green Belt development plans, shock at the size of a new retirement complex and a call for irresponsible dog owners to be 'shopped' to council officials in this month's letters...

Green Belt housing plan must be resisted

We should resist Newcastle's attempt to build on Green Belt land as fiercely as possible.

The rights to Green Belt land have been hard fought for by previous generations and the reasons still hold good. These are the lungs for large cities which allow them to breathe, and their loss will be Newcastle's as well as Northumberland's.

Kingston Park, Woolsington, and the Airport buildings and the Badger are almost continuous along the east side of the A696, and the space to the south of the proposed green area is built up solidly to the A1.

Ponteland lies alongside most of Callerton Lane and Throckley is at the end of Ponteland Road. That does not leave very much open land at all.

The high density housing being built by Newcastle City is in my view totally unacceptable, unpleasant visually and socially, and will only build up problems for the future. Go and look at Newcastle Great Park. Bleak narrow streets, with no front gardens, garages in garage blocks behind the three storey terrace houses, and no room for trees or greenery.

We must stand firm and not allow ourselves and our countryside be steamrollered by the tactics of a misguided Authority.

Ian C Brown
Church Flatt, Ponteland

Former resident "astounded" at size of retirement complex

As a former resident of Ponteland village, and having

lived and worked there for almost 50 years, I was astounded to see on one of my recent and regular visits back to the place I still consider 'home' the rather large mainly three storey block of retirement apartments which has just been built by McCarthy & Stone on the former school site at North Road.

I find it almost unbelievable that a development of this size and height ever came to gain planning approval, adjacent as it is to a conservation area which I believe covers the Blackbird Inn and the three properties fronting on to North Road.

I cannot help but feel that this development, because of its sheer size, is totally unsuitable and unsympathetic, not only to the village as a whole, but in particular to the existing nearby properties which now look to be almost totally engulfed by it.

How it ever found its way successfully through the planning process is simply beyond my comprehension as it appears to be inappropriately sited. The 'overbuild' has done little if anything to enhance the appearance of what was once a lovely old rural village.

John T Henderson
Camden Square, North Shields

We have a problem with Sunday drivers as well

In issue 76 (Jan 12) I read with interest the letter from Mrs A Matthew re the parking in Callerton Lane.

We have the same problem on Sundays in Mayfair Gardens and Fairney Edge and Fairney Close. Some Sundays it is nearly impossible to drive cars out. The

sight lines are blocked and again vehicles are parked on the grass verges. Despite the sign 'no parking on grass', several drivers ignore this completely.

I have rung the Council and the Highways dept regularly over the last few years but to no avail. They did say they would look into it. The result was double yellow lines as far as Athol House. They also erected a sign saying no access to Mayfair Gardens except for vehicles wanting access to surrounding buildings.

The Council is not interested and say that as it is a parking matter it is the responsibility of the police. They, in turn, do not want to know. The fact that we pay our Council Tax is no help at all.

Joyce Fagan
Mayfair Gardens, Ponteland

Please report owners allowing dog fouling in park to Council

I apologise to readers to raise the subject of dog waste once again. But having visited Ponteland Park yesterday to enjoy an outdoor fitness session, I was appalled to count a total of 11 large deposits within the small area of the picnic tables.

Not only was this highly unpleasant and a health hazard, but also an embarrassment to local residents as there were new joiners in our group, some of whom had never visited the park before. They are now left with the impression that Ponteland Park is a dog toilet, where a handful of irresponsible dog owners are spoiling community amenities for other users.

Would any offenders please write in to explain why they

think it is acceptable to spoil the enjoyment of the park for others? I am intrigued to discover how collecting one's dog waste is so difficult.

If any readers are aware of regular offenders, please let the Council know who can send a dog warden to issue spot fines.

Verity Shepley
Rothley Close, Ponteland

Thanks to Good Samaritan

The Bonnar family would like to express our heartfelt thanks to 'the Good Samaritan' who stopped his car one morning in October to help our daughter Louisa when she fell off her bicycle on her way to work on Darras Road beside the Nat West Bank.

He took both her and her bicycle home and waited with her until her dad arrived to take her off to hospital. She had X-rays which revealed a fractured elbow and lots of cuts and bruises. She is now fully recovered.

Jane Bonnar
Hawthorn Way, Darras Hall

Thank you for handing my handbag in

I should like to take this very belated opportunity to thank the person who most kindly handed in my bag which I left on a number 78 bus.

It was on a Monday in December – I got off the bus on Middle Drive and then realised that I had left my handbag on the seat. However, by the time we contacted Stagecoach it had been handed in.

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.

March issue deadlines: The March issue will be delivered on March 1 and 2. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday February 13. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the March issue.

What's on...

Northumberland Fuchsia Society

Our next meeting is on Thursday February 2 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 February 3, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see <http://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 February 4.

Meet the Lions event

Ponteland Lions are holding a "Meet the Lions" event at the Memorial Hall on Saturday February 4 at 2.30pm. All Senior Citizens are invited to this FREE event. The Ponteland Lions have arranged for entertainment, food, raffles and bingo. Tickets are available from Andy on 01661 871844 or John on 0845 8339913.

Choral evensong to mark Accession anniversary

Monday February 6 is the 60th Anniversary of the Accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to the throne. On Sunday February 5 at 6.30pm St Mary's Church choir will sing Choral Evensong at Holy Saviour, Milbourne, and all are welcome. Please don't let the word "choral" put you off. It is a lovely service, and the choir do the work - just come and enjoy good music and a lovely atmosphere. Some of the music will be by Thomas Morley, who was a composer in the court of the first Queen Elizabeth. There will be a celebratory glass of wine afterwards. If the weather is bad, please do check the church website first at www.pontelandstmary.co.uk

Cantonese evening to raise funds for Memorial Hall appeal

Ponteland Memorial Hall is holding a Cantonese Evening at The New Rendezvous Restaurant, Bell Villas, on Monday February 6 at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £17 and are available from the Memorial Hall Office on Mondays 2pm - 4pm, Tuesdays 10am - 12noon and Fridays 2pm - 4pm. Call (01661) 822603 or email infopmh@yahoo.co.uk

New members welcome at Ponteland Photographic Society

We welcome new participants at our meetings (7.30pm in Merton Hall every Monday) and our February events include 'My Top Ten Images' from members on February 6, cut and paste

workshop on the 13th, we have a visitor, Roy Elwood, on the 20th showing his 'Still in the Dark' prints and finally we have the Open Digital Print Competition on February 27. All are welcome to an enjoyable and interesting evening and for further information see www.pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk

Events at Merton Hall

Tea and coffee served Mon - Sat 30p per cup 9.30am - 11.15am. Country market every Friday from February 24 8.30am - 11am selling preserves, cakes, hand knitted garments, jewellery etc. The U3A History Group is looking for new members and meets on the 2nd Monday of every month from 2pm - 4pm. Lots going on in Merton Hall from bridge, wine tasting, tai chi and photography, to name just a few. All information is on the notice board outside Merton Hall. Come and join in the fun - all welcome. To book the hall email mertonhall123@gmail.com or call 07757 952759.

Darras Hall WI

Darras Hall W.I. welcome you to their February meeting on Thursday February 9 at 2pm in the URC Hall. Our speaker this month is Mrs Pat Lowery who will give us a "City Guide to the Quayside". The competition will be for "Something Nautical" - let's "sea" what turns up!

Celebrate Valentines at new hotel

The new DoubleTree by Hilton at Newcastle International Airport is celebrating Valentines in its Fratello's restaurant on 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th February. Join us for a three course meal with a glass of prosecco on arrival for £24.95 per person. Free underground parking. Call (01661) 867020 to book or reserve on Opentable www.newcastleinternationalairport.doubletree.com

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

The next meeting is being held at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm on Monday February 13. Speaker Chris Foote-Wood will hold a talk entitled 'Walking Over The Waves'. 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 at donaldflloyd@sky.com or on (01661) 872661.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our speaker on Monday February 13 will be Julia Cordon. She has been directing the development of 'The Explorers Garden' in Pitlochry since its inception and will be telling us about the garden and her work there through pictures. The garden is laid out in geographical zones and exhibits the work of the Scottish explorers through the plants they discovered. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road. The doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 4132574.

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild meet in St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland from 2pm to 4pm on Monday February 27 for a mini workshop with Dot Hankey. Bring sewing equipment. Tea or coffee and biscuits are offered at all meetings. A friendly welcome is offered to everyone. A visitor's fee of £3 is charged. Further information from Sandra Rusby on (01661) 832172.

Ponteland Civic Society


At the next meeting of Ponteland Civic Society on February 27 in St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm Freda Thompson will speak on 'Wasteland to Wonderland' - the recycling of buildings from their original use. This meeting has been rescheduled from the very snowy period in 2011! Visitors are most welcome for whom there is a nominal charge.

St Mary's Singers concert raises £1,000 for Diabetes UK

Grateful thanks to all the friends of St. Mary's Singers who came to the Christmas Concert on December 10. Thanks to your generosity we were able to send a cheque for £1,000 to the Diabetes UK Newcastle Voluntary Support Group. A date for your diary: on Saturday March 31 our Easter Concert when the programme will be Vivaldi's Gloria, Zadok the Priest Handel and Gilbert and Sullivan Trial by Jury.

Ponteland's weekly market

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



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	WEDNESDAY 1 st 8 th 15 th 22 nd 29 th	6.45 7.45pm

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Dignity and Luxury

How Helen McArdle is changing the landscape of retirement living in the North East

Getting older should be a relaxing time, spent socialising, looking after your wellbeing and enjoying time with your family and friends and this is just what Helen McArdle had in mind when she designed her new retirement community in Low Fell.

Opening in early February, Springfield House is a 68-bed care home built on the site of the old Springfield Hotel on Durham Road in Low Fell. In addition to the home, there are 21 one and two bedroom retirement apartments connected to it, giving apartment owners direct access to the home.

Facilities in Springfield House include: The Orangery Restaurant, tea rooms, a cinema room, internet café, GP's surgery, function room with bar, beauty salon and gym.

All residents, apartment owners and their families will have full access to all of these facilities as well as an array of activities including cooking demonstrations and beauty treatments and therapies. Apartment owners can also purchase care and domestic services as and when they need them.



Springfield House will offer residents a wide choice of size and style of bedrooms, decorated and furnished to the highest of standards; some even have their own doors leading directly into the beautiful gardens.

There are also four self-contained suites set in an exclusive wing of the home, which have a lounge, bedroom, bathroom and kitchenette, making them perfect for couples as well as single people.

The vision behind the new site comes from Helen McArdle herself, who is a constant

driving force behind Helen McArdle Care. She has not only built a community where people can live as independently as they want, with as much support as they need, but she has also created a lifestyle that reflects the dignity and luxury that older people deserve.

Heading up the team at Springfield House is Lisa Hall who has worked in care, health and wellbeing of older adults for 20 years.

Lisa is thrilled to be managing Springfield House: "It is great to work for such a forward thinking company who genuinely care about what they are doing and who they are doing it for. I am really excited about the completion of the care home and apartments and can't wait to welcome people to their new homes."

Springfield House and Eslington Mews Open Day – Sunday 05 February 10am – 4pm

For further information please call: 0191 461 8870 Springfield House, Durham Road, Low Fell
www.helenmcardlecare.co.uk

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Lads beat dads to end winning run

The lads beat the dads to end a three year winning run at Ponteland's annual New Year's Day Wheelbarrow Race.

Oscar Redman and Dan Pybus were first to the finishing line and last year's junior race champions set a new record time for the men's wheelbarrow race of 6min 54secs. They beat their fathers Andy Pybus and Alan Redman, who had won the previous three races, into second place. Rob and Ben Ashford were third.

Penny Storer and Rachael Lawson were victorious in the women's race in a time of 10min 55secs. Heidi and Heather Craighead came second and Judy Andrews and Julia Rowley finished third.

Sam and Jack Long were the junior race winners.

The event, organised by Ponteland 41 Club, takes place over a mile-long course which starts and ends at the Blackbird Inn and this year 29 teams took part in front of hundreds of spectators. The race raised £400 for the Leonard Cheshire Home for disabled people in Ponteland, which is planning to build an extension.



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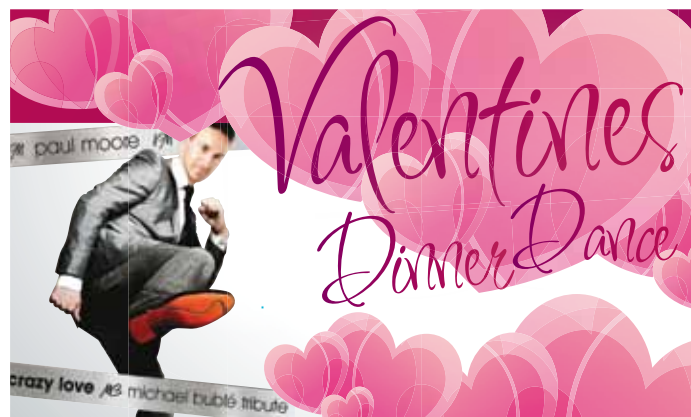
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Friday 10th February 2012

**Valentines dinner dance in
The Cheviot Suite.**

£19.95 per person or £99.00 per couple including overnight accommodation and full English breakfast.

Let your loved one know how much you love them by treating them to a romantic evening, including a cocktail on arrival, three course dinner with live entertainment from our Michael Buble tribute act featuring Paul Moore and a disco

Tuesday 14th February

**Valentines Day Dinner in the Convivium Restaurant
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Contact Louise if you have a problem with your neighbours



By PC Paul Henery
Ponteland Community Beat Manager

There have been a total of eight crimes reported in the Ponteland area in the period from December 13 to January 15.

They break down as follows:

- six thefts (including four shoplifting)
- one common assault
- one burglary to non dwelling.

There have been four 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 February 4 at 10am in the Co-op Broadway with PC Henery.
- Saturday February 11 at 9.30am in Merton Hall with CSO Ruddick.
- Saturday February 18 at 11.30am at Belsay shop with PC Davison.

The next Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving

(LMAPS) meeting will be held on Tuesday February 21 at 9.30am at the East Centre, Prudhoe.

Following reports of anti social behaviour involving young people playing football in inappropriate places where damage may be caused or nuisance caused to residents, a number of acceptable behaviour agreements were drawn up between youths and their parents, Northumberland County Council, ISOS housing and the police.

Whilst these ABAs have been effective, the agencies involved also want to provide a suitable football facility for young people, especially during the dark nights when grassed pitched are waterlogged and in darkness.

Funding was found to pay for three evening 'Cage Football' sessions in January in the car park of Ponteland High School/ Ponteland Middle School. This supervised mobile, floodlit football pitch comes with its own expert coaches to encourage all of

Ponteland's budding Shearers to improve their skills.

I also want to introduce your Community Safety Officer for Ponteland and rural Northumberland. Louise Stobbart is based at Prospect House, Hexham, in the Public Protection department.

Louise works with a range of agencies including the police, local schools, environmental health, licensing and youth offending team to support the management of neighbourhoods and identify interventions and solutions to issues. Along with casework, Louise works on a strategic level looking at more holistic solutions to longer term problems in neighbourhoods.

If you live in a private property, whether as a tenant or owner, and have problems with noise nuisance, anti social behaviour, neighbour disputes then you can contact Louise for guidance by email at louise.stobbart@northumberland.gov.uk or on (01434) 652383.



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