

# pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



MP accuses county council  
of Green Belt sell-off plan

Bill and Gladys celebrate  
70th wedding anniversary

Phone scam warning  
from police

## Nursery's charity ball raises £20,000 for baby unit



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# Airport's new website takes off

**These stunning aerial shots were taken to help launch Newcastle Airport's new website.**

From the controversial Northumberlandia artwork in Cramlington to the Gateshead Angel, St Mary's Island in Whitley Bay and Penshaw Monument on Wearside, the landmarks were chosen to represent the local authority areas served by the airport.

Airport bosses say the site at [www.newcastleairport.com](http://www.newcastleairport.com), which boasts 3.5 million visits per year, has been fully redeveloped to create a cleaner, less cluttered online tool helping passengers navigate with ease and is compatible with smartphones and tablets.

David Laws, Chief Executive of Newcastle International, said: "We're delighted with the initial feedback on our new website. We wanted to simplify the information so it's in an easy-to-use format and also wanted to make the website visually appealing by using panoramic photography of the destinations served by our airline partners as well as vibrant images of the North East region. We're very pleased with the overall look."

Members of the public are encouraged to give their thoughts on the new website by emailing [feedback@newcastleinternational.co.uk](mailto:feedback@newcastleinternational.co.uk) or contacting the airport via Facebook or Twitter.





# Nursery's charity ball raises £20,000 for Tiny Lives

**Plans to hold a Christmas party for staff at a Ponteland nursery ended up with a charity ball which raised £20,000 for a hospital's special baby care unit.**

The idea for the Diamond Ice Charity Ball, held at Gosforth Park Marriott Hotel on December 15, came from Ponteland Private Nursery manager Jo Slade, whose son Joseph, now 18 and 6ft 2in, was born five weeks prematurely weighing just 4lb and spent several weeks in the RVI's Tiny Lives Unit.

Jo and her 20 colleagues invited parents of children at the nursery, friends and business associates to the glittering event, and were stunned with both the turnout and the prizes donated which helped raise so much money on the night.

More than 440 guests turned up for a three course meal with live entertainment provided by Jo's band Shameless and bidding on auction prizes including a long weekend for ten on a luxury yacht in the Balearics, a chauffeur driven trip in a Lamborghini Gallardo and jewel encrusted Jimmy Choo shoes donated by Cheryl Cole.

Businesses which supported the event included Bebside Auto Exchange, Collectables, BMW, Statex, All Media Ltd,



Hire Torque, MTREC, Armstrong Recovery and local restaurants Fratelli, Rialtos, the new Rendezvous and the Badger.

Ponteland Private Nursery was opened in 2009 by Darras Hall couple Deborah and Mark Jackson and has places for 50 children aged up to four years.

Deborah said: "This all started as an idea by our manager Jo to hold a staff

Christmas party with a difference - and ended up with a hugely successful charity ball which has raised over £20,000 for a superb cause.

"We'd like to thank all the businesses and individuals who donated amazing auction prizes and everyone who turned up to support us. We are already planning another ball for next Christmas."

Carol Meredith from Tiny Lives added: "Tiny Lives is delighted to have the wonderful support of Ponteland Private Nursery. It's been a real pleasure to work with Deborah and Jo who organised such a stunning event in aid of Tiny Lives.

"The £20,000 raised will provide the highest quality care and support for the 700 sick and premature babies on the Special Care Baby Unit every year. Our thanks to everyone in Ponteland who made the Diamond & Ice Ball evening such a sparkling success. Meanwhile, it's an exciting time as Tiny Lives becomes an independent charity and our new website [www.tinylives.org.uk](http://www.tinylives.org.uk) goes live later this month."

*Cover shot by Trevor Walker. Jo Slade (left) and Deborah Jackson are pictured at the ball. Photo by Dan Hetherington.*

## Hop on for a cheap bus ride – and get a free cuppa!

**The new community bus service serving Ponteland residents of all ages has now been in operation for three months.**

The Ponteland Hopper, which runs every Friday between 10am and 2pm, provides transport to and from home and is ideal for shopping, meeting friends, attending a club or visiting the doctor or dentist.

Anyone using the bus to visit Merton Hall during February and March can take advantage of a free cup of tea or coffee before 11.15am.

The cost of a return fare is £2, and to use the service passengers must be a member of Adapt (NE) at a cost of £2 per year (membership forms are available on the bus).

Telephone Adapt on 01434 600599 no later than noon on Thursday to book a seat the following day.





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## PROJECTS REPORT

### Memorial Hall

A meeting was scheduled to be held with representatives from the Memorial Hall on 15 January.

### River bank repairs

Quotations are to be sought from suitable companies.

### Skate Park

The County Council's Public Protection Unit has asked that a noise survey is carried out in respect of this project. This is currently being examined.

### Repairs to brick wall at Waitrose bridge

An application for the works to be carried out was to be submitted to the Environment Agency in the next couple of weeks.

### Repainting of the Millennium Bridge

Further quotes are to be sought for this work.

## BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2013-14

The Council considered the budget for 2013-14. The precept request had to be submitted to the County Council by 22 January.

The County Council had confirmed that it had agreed to pay a non-recurrent grant in 2013-14 to compensate for a reduced tax base as a consequence of the localisation of council tax benefits. This sum should be deducted from the precept request and payment of the grant would be made with the first precept payment in April.

The Council approved the budget as submitted and agreed to levy a precept of £349,631 on the County Council which took account of the grant from NCC. This represented an increase of less than 0.5% on 2012-13 even though the Town Council would be responsible for Prestwick Cemetery from 1 April 2013.

A further meeting would be held to determine the projects list for 2013-14 although it was agreed that some items could be carried out in this financial year.

*This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council's meeting held on January 9.*

## Deadline for questionnaire responses extended

### The deadline for returns for a questionnaire seeking residents' views on long term planning and development of Ponteland has been extended by a month.

In the January issue of Pont News we carried a copy of the questionnaire for readers to complete and send in to the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Group.

The group, made up of residents, Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Community Partnership, has been set up to progress a Neighbourhood Plan for Ponteland to promote and improve social,

economic and environmental conditions in the area over the next 20 to 30 years.

The survey is an initial step to identify which issues/themes are the most important to residents, including housing development, infrastructure, public services and the environment.

The group has received a good response returns to the survey and many comments which have been helpful, and has extended the return date to 24th February 2013. Questionnaires can be downloaded from the group's website at [www.pontelandpcp.co.uk](http://www.pontelandpcp.co.uk) which also provides a selection of 'drop-off' points for completed forms.

## LIONS SAY A THOUSAND THANKS

Ponteland Lions Club has thanked the members of the public who helped it raise more than £1,000 during the month of December.

The first flag day collection at Tesco in Kingston Park brought in £253.04. This has been given to the Children North East charity.

Six days later, Lions members collected on Broadway, Darras Hall, and within Waitrose, Ponteland, raising £568.11. Their final effort at the Ponteland branch of Dobbies Garden World brought in £235.85.

The latter two flag days were for Ponteland Lions' charity account. Everything collected is donated to good causes without any deductions.

## END OF KIRKHEATON SHOW?

A popular agricultural show has been cancelled due to a lack of venue, funding and support.

The decision was taken at a Kirkheaton Show committee meeting last month. The show, held each July, did not go ahead in 2012 due to poor weather conditions but it looks like it has no future.



# Barrow boys beat dads second year running

**The domination of Ponteland's annual New Year's Day Wheelbarrow Race by two families continued in 2013.**

Dan Pybus, 15, and Oscar Redman, 16, won the race for the second year running with a time of 7 min 17 sec - once again beating their fathers Andy Pybus and Alan Redman, who had won five years running from 2007 to 2011, into second place. Brothers Andrew and Duncan Robertson were third.

The ladies winners were Rebecca Powell and Mel Jarvis (10 min 23 sec) and first to finish the junior race were Becky Tinnion, aged 14, and Lois Daniel-Black, nine.

The New Year's Day event, organised by Ponteland 41 Club with support from Ponteland Rugby Club, takes place over a mile-long course which starts and ends at the Blackbird Inn and hundreds of spectators came along to watch the races.

Local businessman Philip Jackson once again took on the role of Lord Mayor of Ponteland to start the proceedings.

Around £400 was collected on the day for good causes.

*Dan Pybus and Oscar Redman win for a second year.  
Photos by Nick Clark: [www.nickclarkimaging.com](http://www.nickclarkimaging.com)*







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## Stunning sunrise shot sparks reader challenge

Our December cover shot was 16-year-old Jessica Keating's award winning photograph of her labrador Inca.

Last month we carried photos of parakeets taken in reader June Atkinson's back garden.

In this issue we have this lovely photo of winter sunrise over Birney Hill taken by our regular correspondent Muriel Sobo.

Can anyone beat these for the March magazine? The challenge is on! Send your photos to [pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk](mailto:pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk) and we will consider them for our next issue.

# MP accuses council chiefs of secret Green Belt sell-off plan

**Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman has accused Northumberland County Council chiefs of a secret plan to sell off Green Belt land.**

The authority is set to publish a long term planning blueprint for the county, which will include plans for the Green Belt in Ponteland and Hexham, this summer.

But Mr Opperman has demanded the council "comes clean" about its plans before the May 2 local elections.

He said: "If the Lib Dem Administration wants to build on the Green Belt that is their choice, but they must let the people have their say. What I am very concerned about is that the Council will delay unveiling its plans for the Green Belt until after the elections, denying people their democratic say.

"The Lib Dems who run the Council must be open and honest. If they hold back telling local people their plans until after the

elections local people will know why, they are not stupid. The Council's plans for the Green Belt must not be a dirty little secret until after the elections.

"In a few weeks time the Council will release its latest document for its local plan. In it they should rule out building on the Green Belt. If they refuse to rule it out they should at least then publish their plans for Green Belt building before the elections. It would be against the spirit of local democracy if it was deliberately done in that way to deny local people their say.

"Locally across my patch there is great, and legitimate fear the Lib Dems are going to push ahead with selling off the Green Belt, whether this is in Ponteland, or Hexham's West End. People must know these plans before they go to the polls in May."

The MP's comments sparked an angry reaction from Coun Jeff Reid, leader of Northumberland County Council. He said: "We are progressing well through the legal

process which Government requires every council to follow in preparation of a robust local plan.

"We have published a timetable according to the Government's guidelines - giving the required time to complete each stage and ensure full consultation with residents.

"We are currently doing a substantial piece of further work to make sure that future housing requirements and population and household information is robust - and will be publishing draft policies on housing, employment land and the Green Belt this summer.

"It seems that Mr Opperman doesn't understand his own Government's processes and his comments are extremely unhelpful."

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**  
Email Your letters at  
[pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk](mailto:pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk)





# Your letters

The attack on Green Belt campaigners by the Vice Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association has provoked a furious backlash in this month's bumper letters page...

## Green Belt Group defend criticism in national magazine

(Response to article by Graeme Bell of 30 November 2012 - Land has value when it's shared)

It was with some surprise that we read in our local news magazine Pont News & Views a report that the Vice President of the Town and Country Planning Association, Graeme Bell, had accused residents of our village of seeking to deny "others a roof over their head".

Having now read the full article, it would appear that Mr Bell's criticism is mainly directed at successive Governments, for allowing a situation "where many still do not have a decent home".

However, the article clearly suggests that existing residents of Ponteland are "privileged" and that we are being selfish in our efforts to protect the Green Belt that has existed around our village for more than 30 years.

Mr Bell should understand that, although there are a number of wealthy individuals who reside in Ponteland, the majority of residents are far from privileged and have worked hard to achieve and maintain a decent home in a pleasant environment.

All this is under threat from aggressive developers who are seeking to profit from weaknesses in the planning policies of Northumberland County Council and the uncertainties created by the radical changes to national planning policy. It is not surprising that those who care passionately about the environment in which they live are striving to defend it.

Ponteland lies close to the edge of the large Tyneside conurbation,

but is separated from it by Green Belt. Newcastle City Council has published plans which would subsume swathes of the Green Belt into city development areas and would reduce the open land between the city and the village of Ponteland very significantly.

Ponteland has a special village character which is characterised by open, rural land on all sides. This was recognised when the Green Belt boundaries were defined and, contrary to Mr Bell's assertion that things have changed, the importance of protecting the open areas which surround Ponteland is more critical than ever.

The National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate and should not be allowed unless there are very special circumstances.

Mr Bell baldly states that sustainable development must take place in the Green Belt and implies that residents should accept it wherever developers choose, but he offers no discussion on the merits of the current green belt policy in Northumberland to support this view.

He does not say what special circumstances exist to justify building in the Green Belt. He also ignores the availability of brownfield land in the area and the high level of supply of homes currently available compared with demand. He is blind to the fact that the developments that are being proposed do not deliver homes at a price that would put roofs over the heads of those he claims to champion.

It is a sad reflection on the Town and Country Planning Association that their Vice President, without any consideration of the specific

local circumstances, feels it appropriate to criticise those who seek to defend the quality of the environment. Perhaps this attitude of planning professionals explains the "dull acres of new build that have gained planning approval" to which he refers.

**Alma Dunigan**  
Chairman,  
Ponteland Green Belt Group  
(letter to the Editor of Planning magazine copied to Pont News)

## Why rubbish attempts to formulate proper Neighbourhood Plan?

Your January issue quotes Mr Graeme Bell who, we are told, is Vice-Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association (which should not be confused with the professional Royal Town Planning Institute).

Mr Bell invokes the ghost of the Trevelyan to imply that those objecting to current proposals for Green Belt land around Ponteland are people of privilege. Make no mistake, however, the people objecting to the present opportunist onslaughts on Ponteland's Green Belt are no more than ordinary residents.

They wish to ensure that the future of the town takes place according to a Neighbourhood Plan which has been properly drawn up and consulted upon. This, I would respectfully point out, is one of the objectives of Mr Bell's Association, which states that they wish to 'empower people and communities to influence decisions that affect them'.

Really? It rather sounds as if Mr Bell is seeking to rubbish our attempts to do just that. Any

developer who comes along with a willingness to fit in with what the community really wants would be welcome; we just haven't seen one yet.

**Philip Ham**  
Chairman,  
Ponteland Civic Society

## Comments were unjustified, unnecessary and unrelated

I would like to respond to comments made by Graeme Bell OBE in the January 2013 edition of Pont News and Views.

I fail to see how the situation in Ponteland in any way relates to Sir Charles and George Trevelyan giving Wallington Hall to the National Trust.

By doing this, surely they were preserving a beautiful building set in acres of gardens that would not be spoiled by adding housing - they were not giving permission for unwanted/unnecessary houses being built to the detriment of the Hall.

Ponteland is a village that is surrounded by Green Belt - Green Belt should mean that and should not be spoiled by contractors choosing an area where they can inflate prices and certainly not for the good of the village which would become over-burdened by extra traffic, a strain on schools and facilities.

Also, I would definitely not class myself as 'someone of privilege seeking to deny others a roof over their head if it comes to any sacrifice to themselves'. I have worked hard all my life to be able to buy my house on Cheviot View, chosen because of its location and so that I could stay in the village I was born in.

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 Thursday February 28. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday February 11. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the March issue.



I am not privileged, I have earned the right to live there. As a resident of Ponteland for 55 years, I would like someone to listen to the views of the people who live there when we say loudly and clearly that we do not want any development on the Green Belt, not to deny people housing but to preserve our village.

Mr. Bell's comments were unjustified, unnecessary and unrelated. I, for one, would like an apology from him.

**Angela McEnaney**  
*Cheviot View,  
Ponteland*

## Green Belt should be protected – not sold to the highest bidder

**An article in the January issue of Pont News & Views quoted Graeme Bell OBE, vice president of the Town & Country Planning Association, referring to Ponteland residents as 'those of privilege' who 'seek to deny others a roof over their head if it comes at any sacrifice to themselves'.**

I consider myself a 'privileged' resident of Ponteland. I have worked in and around Ponteland for 20 years, raised my family in Ponteland, supported the local schools, shops and leisure facilities and paid the Council Tax.

I do not object to anyone moving into this beautiful village, there are plenty of homes for sale, the Care Village site will soon have nice new houses built on and part of the Police College site is earmarked for housing. How can that man say we seek to deny others a roof over their heads?

What the residents of Ponteland are saying is: 'don't allow building on the Green Belt - not ours, nor anybody else's either!'

Mr Bell is also quoted as saying 'on this small island, we must learn to share'. Surely it is because this is a small island we must fight to keep and protect what we have left of the countryside and the wildlife. This is our heritage and we must protect it - not sell it to the highest bidder.

**Margaret Appleby**  
*Cheviot View  
Ponteland*

## Developer's job claims incredible

**I read with intrigue the advertorial by Lugano in PNV Jan 13 issue 88 pages 6-7.**

The article claims 900 jobs, listing 672 construction and 228 permanent job opportunities at the former site of Birney Hill Farm.

The construction of 280 houses we assume would be spread over several years and, even allowing for the extra work in constructing the new road and other infrastructure, I believe it is difficult to justify the claim of 672 construction jobs - few of which would be for Ponteland residents - or envisage how so many persons could be employed on the site whilst the proposed construction was taking place.

In my opinion, Lugano's claim of construction jobs is quite meaningless without stating the number of job years.

We also need to look at the claim of 228 permanent positions in the suggested community farm and visitor centre - where is the evidence that this would be a viable business and in any way permanent?

The job claims in the advertorial are simply not credible. Has anyone taken account of the existing permanent job losses that proposed development on Green Belt agricultural land brings resulting in farming families losing their homes, livelihoods and income? Farm and contract worker positions, as well as jobs further down the food chain, are all under threat. These positions are productive rather than service industry orientated and will be destroyed.

The article also claims an investment of £96m of which £16m is to be invested in Ponteland. Based on the proposed 280 houses at Birney Hill site, this would make the average house cost price of £285k and therefore the properties being proposed can't possibly be low cost socially affordable housing that was suggested at their planning days.

Regarding the investment in improvements to Ponteland pledged, including traffic management and local schools, these would be necessitated by the extra demand created by the development and does not mean that the village would be better

off overall - we will just be busier.

The proposals are difficult to believe and in no way compensate for the damage done to the village.

**Gaye Templeton**  
*Darras Road  
Darras Hall*

## No right to deny others to move into Ponteland

**Barbara and I came to Ponteland in 1959 and lived at 4 The Beeches surrounded by Farmer Straughan's fields.**

In a few years Bellway built the Ladywell Estate. We lost the fields but gained some very pleasant neighbours.

My surgery was a bedroom in 'The Yews' Bell Villas and the patients sat on the stairs. The village school was sited on what is now Coates Green. There was no health centre or modern library and there was still an old POW camp at the bottom of The Rise.

I could go on and offend and I often do! I am not a local activist but a realist.

The fact is that virtually all adults living in Ponteland are incomers and, at the risk of giving some of your readers the screaming abababs, would suggest we do not have the divine right to prevent others from moving to this pleasant village.

**Jack White**  
*Fox Covert Lane  
Ponteland*

## Massive concerns over Memorial Hall donation unwarranted

**Lesley Noble's 'massive concerns' (Your letters January 2013 issue) are unwarranted.**

The grant (not a donation) to the Hall was made by the Banks Community Fund which is entirely separate from the Property Division. The application by the Hall Committee was submitted to the Community Fund in March 2012, some time before Banks Property had made their proposals public.

The Banks Community Fund is funded through Landfill Tax Credits and several Ponteland groups have received grants due to Ponteland's close proximity to

the open cast site on the Berwick Hill road.

The grant enabled the Hall Committee to replace a 45 year old central heating system that was leaking badly and very expensive to operate. Quite simply, without the grant, the Hall would probably have closed this winter.

**David Cobb**  
*Honorary Treasurer  
Ponteland Memorial Hall*

## Action needed on Middle Drive's speeding motorists

**In your excellent magazine (January 2013 Issue 88) PC Rob Anderson mentioned five roads which were subject to excessive vehicle speeding.**

He did not mention Middle Drive, which regularly has cars travelling in excess of 50 - 70 mph! I have made several complaints to the police, the Town and County Councils requesting the installation of traffic calming measures, eg 'chicanes', as in Newcastle.

I do not approve of the use of 'sleeping policemen' as they can cause problems with catalytic converters and tracking problems etc.

Doesn't PC Anderson travel along Middle Drive in an unmarked car, especially on a Sunday? The motorists would soon get the message if they received a hefty fine for their bad driving habits.

**Bernard Wright,**  
*Crossfell,  
Darras Hall*

## Thanks for finding my sunglasses

**Thank you to the kind person who put my expensive sunglasses where I could find them outside the URC Church on Broadway on New Year's Day.**

I dropped them on the way to the Wheelbarrow Race. A good and kind start to the New Year.

**Mrs Graham**  
*The Rise,  
Darras Hall*



# What's on...

## 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 1, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see: [www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html](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 and Broadway, Darras Hall. Their next surgery is on Saturday February 2.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday February 11 is Barry Mead and his subject: Historic Orkney. 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. The annual subscription is £10. For further details contact Donald Lloyd at [donaldflloyd@sky.com](mailto:donaldflloyd@sky.com) or on (01661) 872661.

## North East of England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday February 11 we are delighted to welcome, John Richards, Emeritus Professor of Botany at Newcastle University who is going to talk about Randle Cooke's magical garden at Kilbryde, Corbridge. Kilbryde was a famous garden from about 1920-1973 when Randle Cooke died he left the garden to the University of Newcastle. The talk is based on Cooke's old transparencies and lantern slides, some dating back to 1928. Our meetings take place in St Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road.

The doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. All welcome, there is no charge for visitors. Details from Terry Teal at [t.teal@btinternet.com](mailto:t.teal@btinternet.com) 0191 4132574.

## Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We meet in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland, on the second Wednesday of the month at 2pm. Visitors £4.

## Ponteland Lions Club

Ponteland Lions now hold a business meeting at their new venue, Merton Hall, on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm. Social meetings are also held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, when a wide range of visits and events are organised for the enjoyment of members and their friends. We welcome prospective new members to join us. Our monthly book stall takes place outside Waitrose on the last Saturday of every month (except December) from 9am until 4pm. Book donations and volunteer helpers are always most welcome. For information about the book stall or becoming a member of Ponteland Lions please call John Morris on 0845 833 9913.

## Ponteland Floral Art Club

Tuesday 19th February, 7.30pm, Ponteland Memorial Hall. Demonstration by Kathleen Gibson of Blaydon (A), 'Inspirational Moments'.

## Merton Hall away day

Away day Thursday 21st February Heighley Gate and Morpeth – from 10am to 3pm. Contact Merton Hall on (01661) 872917 for details. Also, pop in Monday to Saturday between 9.45am and 11.15am and pay only 30p for your first cuppa and your second is free.

## Embroiderers' Guild - Ponteland branch

We now meet at the Memorial Hall from 2pm – 4pm on the fourth Monday of the month (except December. On Bank Holidays the meeting is on the preceding Monday). On

25th February 'Ten Years of Stitching' - talk by Maria Shuttleworth. On 25th March Mini Workshop – 'Make a Sewing Bag' with Jane Penny (using all your favourite stitches). New members and visitors are most welcome (you don't have to be an expert to join!) Visitors' fee £3 (includes tea/coffee and biscuits). Further information from Carol Bird (01661) 881395.

## Fairtrade Fortnight in Ponteland

Ponteland is set to celebrate its Fairtrade Town Status during this year's Fairtrade Fortnight, 25th February to 10th March. A 'Big Brew' Fairtrade coffee morning on Sat 23rd Feb, in St Mary's Church Hall will start the celebrations and another 'Big Brew' on Sat 9th February in St Matthew's Church Hall will be the closing event. Our Fairtrade School, Ponteland Community High School will also be holding events at this time. Look out for details on posters.

## Ponteland Photographic Society

We meet at 7.30pm every Monday evening through to April 15, 2013 in the large room at Merton Hall in Ponteland, with a short break over the Christmas/New Year holiday and again at Easter. Meetings usually last for two hours. If you are interested in photography, you're welcome to come along and see how we can develop your interest even further.

## Ponteland's weekly market


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

## Pont Badminton Club

Pont Badminton Club meet every Friday evening from 8.30pm-10pm at Ponteland Leisure Centre, Callerton Lane. Adults of all ages will be assured of a warm welcome. Just come along or contact 07986 388 822 for more information.

## Ponteland Community Partnership

The Partnership meets on every third Wednesday of the month (except August and December) at 7pm in the small meeting room in Merton Hall. It is an open meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend.



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	WEDNESDAY	6 <sup>th</sup> 13 <sup>th</sup> 20 <sup>th</sup> 27 <sup>th</sup> 6.45 7.45pm

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# Latest dental implant technology comes to Ponteland

## Dentists hold open evening to showcase new facilities

**Stylish is not a word you would normally use when thinking about dental surgeries, but a trip to the new Higgins and Winter Dental practice in Bell Villas is something of an eye opener. The installation of a 3D dental scanner has further confirmed Kevin Higgins and Richard Winter's commitment to providing the best of care for their patients. Chris Jennings found out more.**

From the friendly welcome to the comfortably furnished waiting area to the huge investment in state-of-the-art equipment, it is clear that Kevin and Richard have paid a great deal of care and attention to the refurbishments which are now complete. The development has created two new surgeries, an imaging suite, an open plan waiting room, a new front entrance and a fully accessible toilet.

The 'icing on the cake' as the pair describe it, is the recent arrival of a dental CT scanner - one of only a handful in the entire Northern region. This means that for the first time patients in Ponteland and Darras Hall can have high precision CT scans to plan the placement of implants without being transferred to hospitals or other dental practices.

This is impressive high tech stuff which reflects the pioneering approach Kevin and Richard are taking with their own first practice, having both previously worked for other dental practices during their lengthy careers.

"With implants becoming more and more popular, it is vital that the correct approach to planning and delivery is taken," says Kevin. "We have the experience and now the equipment to be able to give the highest standard of care in this area."

Richard added: "For providing treatments like the All-on-4 (sometimes known as teeth in a day - a pioneering technique of removing failing teeth and placing a full arch of fixed replacement teeth in a matter of hours) this type of equipment is not just useful, but essential."

Higgins and Winter Dental Practice provides dental implant services for patients across the North East and acts as a referral centre for other dentists. The main indications for dental implants are for patients who have lost teeth or who have gaps, have loose dentures or whose own teeth are failing and would like a solution which gives them greater confidence in eating and socialising. Higgins and Winter

are able to provide all dental implant solutions on site, from start to finish, and have a combined experience of dental implant treatments of over 15 years.

**The pair are opening the doors to their transformed practice in an open event being held on Wednesday March 6 from 6pm to 9pm.**

All current and prospective patients are invited to join Kevin, Richard and the team to see the practice and find out more about possible solutions for any concerns that they may have. All discussions on the night will be free of charge and the evening will be informal and welcoming. This will present a great opportunity to meet the team and find out more about how they can help you. If you are interested in this come along on the evening, or alternatively call the practice so that you can reserve time for your own personal discussion.

**You can find out more about the new Higgins and Winter Dental Practice at their website at [higginsandwinterdental.com](http://higginsandwinterdental.com) or call the surgery on (01661) 872979.**

**Higgins & Winter**  
Dental Practice



The new CT scanner which enables precision planning for complex dental surgery and (inset) a CT scan image and one of the dental suites.





## Time for a change?

After the hustle and bustle of Christmas and the celebrations of the New Year it often seems that come February the festive season is a distant memory. I for one have already broken the resolutions I made with good intentions and high hopes just one month before but in the words of Alexander Pope “to err is human”.

Here at Major Family Law we assist people who are often experiencing the most difficult and challenging changes of their lives, following the breakdown of a relationship. We pride ourselves on being a specialist family law practice that provides a first class service to our clients who are treated at all times with respect, compassion and professionalism.

Making resolutions at the start of a new year helps us to identify the areas of our lives where we would like to make positive changes and redirect our energy towards new opportunities. It is important not to lose sight of that.

This February instead of reproaching myself for my lack of resolve I intend to focus with renewed intent on the goals I hope to achieve this year. Spring is on the horizon, a season renowned for the changes it brings and I am also encouraged that this year the Chinese New Year is 10th February, so perhaps we can all make a fresh start from then!

It may be that you are experiencing similar changes in your life and have sought the advice and assistance of a solicitor. Although we hope this is not the case, sometimes the relationship with your solicitor can be a source of anxiety. You may lack confidence in the way in which your case is being handled or perhaps feel your solicitor is not ‘on board’ or you simply do not have a good relationship. You do have the option to change. Whilst we cannot guarantee a different result we can offer a different and refreshing approach.

Changing your solicitor is a relatively straightforward process which should not cause any unnecessary delay. Provided your solicitor’s fees are paid up to date and there is not an impending court hearing the procedure is simple. We would meet you for an initial consultation and then liaise with your former solicitor to have your case transferred to us and obtain your file of papers. Although we are a local firm our client base is international. We frequently deal with clients who may work away from home during the week or live outside of the local area.

If you feel this applies to you, then make this year count. You have once chance to get it right and changing your solicitor could be the best change you make.

Rebecca Tarn, Major Family Law  
01661 82 45 82

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Barrack Obama

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# Congratulations Bill and Gladys

## Couple celebrate platinum wedding anniversary

By Muriel Sobo

**Bill and Gladys Boone celebrated 70 years of marriage on Boxing Day. That is a platinum anniversary and a rare event.**

In January 2013 they both reached 96 years of age and a surprise party to celebrate both their platinum anniversary and their birthdays was laid on by some of their many friends at the Ponteland Golf Club where they have both been members for years.

Gladys is a former President of the ladies section. Although no longer playing golf they are still active in the local Rotary Club and Inner Wheel.

Bill and Gladys came north to Ponteland from London in 1967 with Bill's job, which was to oversee the publicity for the merger of the Reyrolle and Parsons engineering firms. They have never wanted to move back south.

Together they have enjoyed a very active life, not only playing several sports but walking and hill climbing, with memories of trips overseas to Nepal, Peru and Africa to name only a few of their destinations. Of course the Lake District was also a favourite.

They have a daughter in Oxford and a son in Vancouver as well as five grandchildren and two great grandchildren, and only wish that they were a little nearer!



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# Beware of telephone and email scams

By PC Rob Anderson  
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



*Total Policing*

**In the period between December 12 and January 11 we have had six crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.**

These break down to the following offences:

- One criminal damage to a school
- One stalking offence
- Two theft others
- One assault occasioning actual bodily harm
- One burglary other than dwelling

The assault, burglary other than dwelling and stalking offences have all been dealt with and enquiries are ongoing in relation to the other offences.

One of our elderly residents has recently, unfortunately, fallen foul of a telephone scam. A company calling themselves Financial Department PPI Claims have been cold calling people informing them they have an outstanding PPI Claim.

They then explain to the people they can claim up to £7,000 if they send money through Ukash to them to pay for their services before they release the money. The

Ukash money voucher has a serial number on it which, when given to the scammers, enables them to claim the money with no way of tracing them or re-claiming the money back.

**PLEASE REMEMBER** - If anyone cold calls regarding any type of money payout there are a number of things you should think about:

- Did they have your name and address when they called?
- Can they tell you which loan company you took the loan out with (if at all)?
- Have they sent you any paperwork which would link in with the phone call?

If they can't answer any questions then don't give them any details or any money. This also applies to any emails or letters which look suspicious.

We would also like to make all businesses and public houses aware about another recent scam which is taking place in the Ponteland area. Persons enter the premises and confuse the staff by claiming they have handed over more money than they actually have to try and get more change back than

they are due. Please check any money which is given to you to avoid this from happening.

If you would like some crime prevention advice please contact PC 613 Davison or myself, PC 395 Anderson, on 101.

Local police surgeries will be held on the following dates:

- PC Lee Davison Sat February 2 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay Village shop
- PC Rob Anderson Tues February 5 11.30am - 12.30pm Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson Sat February 16 11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway
- CSO Jill Ruddick Sat March 2 9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland

Please come along and have a chat to get to know us. Check the Northumbria Police website for details on engagement days: [northumbria.police.uk/your\\_neighbourhood/northumberland/east\\_tynedale/events/eventlist.asp?area=F8: East Tynedale](http://northumbria.police.uk/your_neighbourhood/northumberland/east_tynedale/events/eventlist.asp?area=F8:EastTynedale)

The next Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) meeting is on February 19 at Sure Start, Thornhill Road, Ponteland.



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# Farewell St Mary's Singers

By Muriel Sobo

**For more than 20 years the St Mary's Singers have been part of our village life in Ponteland and entertained us with many different concerts and soloists.**

They have raised the rafters and brought tears to our eyes but, after all this time, their voices and faculties are no longer what they were and they are calling it a day while they are still standing!

The singers, like the audience, are of all denominations and none, we just appreciate the talent and effort that has gone into making music in our beautiful parish church.

They have been coaxed and bullied by June Reed and she has given her time without stint since retiring from her teaching job. God bless you June for the pleasure you have given to hundreds of us. The choir no doubt will miss their Thursday evenings making music.

None of this has been possible without many helpers in different roles and over the years more than £25,000 has been raised for local and national charities. A wonderful effort, and thanks to a great village choir, their director June Reed, their very talented pianist Ann Redhead, the singers and soloists and all those who lend a hand behind the scenes.

The last farewell concert was held before Christmas when the choir sang a selection from Handel's Messiah followed by traditional carols and some beautifully sung Christmas songs, and with audience participation. A spellbinding performance and quite emotional too, as another chapter of church-based activities ended.



## Can you help Carol with Gambian charity drive?

**A Ponteland teaching assistant is appealing for donations to ensure she arrives at a poverty stricken school in Gambia this Easter laden with gifts.**

Carol Morgan, who works at Richard Coates Middle School, is making her fourth visit to the West African country in April and hopes to take goods including clothing, stationery, sports equipment and old laptops, as well as cash to support children and staff at Sifoe School.

Carol, from Morpeth, said: "The school has 900 pupils over a four day week. For many the free meal they receive there is the only meal they are going to have that day. Some of the money we raise supports the school meal programme."

There are also plans to develop a school garden, so seeds, watering cans and wiring are also on the list of purchases, and cash will also be used to pay for a tailor who mends school uniforms at just one Gambian Dalasi (2p) each.

Carol is part of a group from the North East who have been going out to the school twice a year for the past decade, visiting each Easter and Autumn.



Any businesses or individuals who would like to help Carol can contact her via Richard Coates Middle School on 01661 823167 or by email at [cm49@Safe-mail.net](mailto:cm49@Safe-mail.net) or on 01670 860235.

*Carol is pictured with children at Sifoe School during her last visit.*





## Councillors reject officers' roundabout advertising plan

By Muriel Sobo

**Northumberland County Council proposed the erection of two metre high advertising hoardings on 26 roundabouts in the county as a way of making money, including Ponteland's Dobbies and Callerton Lane/Rotary Way roundabouts.**

There were many protests from local councils, including Ponteland Town Council, the Ponteland Civic Society and a number of individuals.

The planners recommended the proposals for the 95 advertising boards but county councillors voted to throw them out at a meeting of the Planning Committee, claiming that they would be a distraction to drivers.

The County Council has a policy to discourage roadside advertising, in any case, and the proposals ran counter to this.

### HEAVY DELAYS ON A696 AT LADYWELL WAY JUNCTION

Heavy delays are expected on the A696 West Road for three months until late April. Three way traffic lights will be in operation at the junction with Ladywell Way due to a lane closure.

## New members welcomed by U3A

By Gillian Williams, Retiring Chairman U3A

**Have you recently retired or perhaps you are not in full time work and would you like an outlet for leisure and learning interests?**

If so, let me tell you about Ponteland's University of the Third Age. It is part of a 30 year old nationwide movement which exists to help like-minded people meet up to share interests, increase knowledge and develop skills.

We have a lively and thriving organisation which combines many separate interests groups and a monthly meeting with a Speaker. Currently there are 38 different interests groups, for example, creative writing, foreign languages, music appreciation, family history and many others.

Each group is self-programming, often meeting in each other's homes and combining exchange of knowledge and hospitality. Importantly, we welcome the creation of new groups suggested by members and in the past year there have been six such introductions.

Come along to St Mary's Church Hall at 2pm on the first Wednesday of any month to meet us and hear that month's Speaker. Alternatively, contact the Membership Secretary Janet McCann on (01661) 822225.

Here are some titles of Talks to feature in the new programme and full details of all our activities are to be found on our website, the address of which is [u3asites.org.uk/pont](http://u3asites.org.uk/pont)

- April 3rd - Kath and Harry Gilbert: Foreign Devils of the Silk Road
- May 1st - Sally Hardy: Saving the Red Squirrel
- June 5th - Dr Caroline Pryer: The Lord Lieutenantcy

### FOOTPATH USERS GROUP: FIRST MEETING

**A group set up to look at issues relating to Ponteland's network of footpaths and bridleways has held its first meeting at the Town Council offices.**

There are 12 volunteers under the chairmanship of Councillor Robin Ramsay. The next meeting will be a workshop with Northumberland County Council on footpaths, rights of way, bridle paths, their legal definitions and how to conduct surveys. The first task of the new group will be to arrange for condition surveys of all the paths in Ponteland this should take place over the next few months.



### Ponteland Golf Club

**"One of Northumberland's finest! Excellent catering & bar facilities."**  
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. The club is actively looking to recruit young adults and has recently introduced intermediate membership categories with no joining fee for 18 to 29 year olds.

For information contact:

Secretary Greg Waugh at:  
[secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk)  
**Tel: 01661 822689**



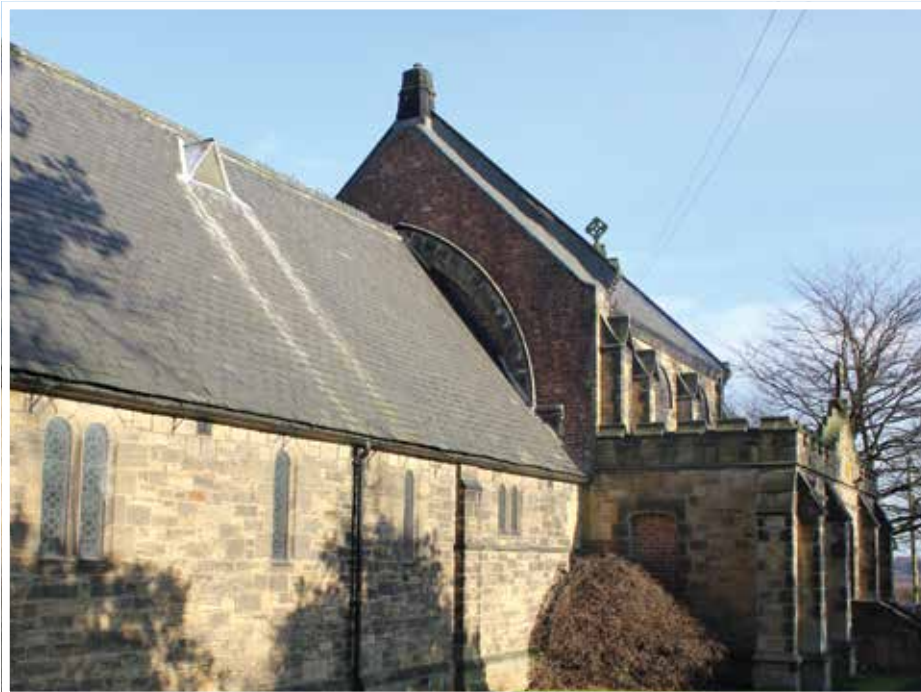
If you would love to try Zumba but think it may be too energetic for you why not try Zumba Gold. Lower impact, easy to follow Zumba rhythms whatever your level of fitness.

**Ponteland Methodist Church**  
Tuesdays 11am-11.45am

**Ponteland United Reformed Church**  
Thursdays 9.30am-10-15am

<http://lindseythomsonheley.zumba.com> Tel: 07732 359399





# Former parishioners invited to help church appeal

**Former parishioners of a church in Westerhope who now live in the Ponteland area are being asked to help an urgent appeal to fund a new roof.**

Rev. Judith Grieve of St. John's Church, Whorlton contacted Pont News and asked if we could help publicise the fundraising appeal.

Rev. Grieve said: "Although we are not part of the parish of Ponteland we know that many residents here trace their family connections back to St. John's so we are inviting them to help us this year because we urgently need to repair our roof and renew our ceiling, which has begun to fall down.

"We are appealing to everyone in the area to help us keep St. John's open for future generations."

The Anglican church was built in 1866 so local residents of the expanding community of Westerhope no longer needed to trek to St. Michael's, Newburn, for their Sunday worship.

It has been well used by the parish community ever since those early days and attracts a goodly number of Sunday worshippers and large numbers of wedding and baptism families who appreciate its prayerful atmosphere and pretty setting.

Key features include the East Window, installed in 1999, depicting the elements of creation and filling the church with swirls of multi-coloured light.

Rev. Grieve added: "Every parish church has a history but we firmly believe that we also have a future serving God in this place so we are working hard to raise money to keep our building in good repair. You can help by supporting our fundraising events, making a donation or joining our regular giving scheme."

Anyone wishing to help can contact Rev. Grieve on 0191 2869648.



## KIRKLEY HALL

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**BRIDAL MAKEUP WORKSHOP  
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*Sunday 3rd March, 1pm-3:30pm*

**MOTHER'S DAY CARVERY  
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*Sunday 10th March, 12noon-2pm*

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**Shhh! Mum's the word**

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