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Four day summer festival at St Mary's

Couple in 600-mile charity cycle ride

## Record turnout for Party in the Park



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# Record turnout for Party in the Park

**Organisers of Ponteland's Party in the Park are celebrating a record attendance at this year's event held earlier this month.**

More than 2,000 people attended, and they drank the tea tent dry and ensured the BBQ was also sold out.

The Rambling, Darras Hall First School Choir and Ponteland Community Band supplied the musical entertainment, Jill Errington led the dancing display and Ray Tansley provided 'Bugs in the Park' with the Friends of Ponteland Park.

Organisers, who will soon announce the amount of money raised, thanked Newcastle International Airport, Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Churches Together for their support.

*Cover shot and p3 photos by Trevor Walker*







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# Ponteland couple pedal for prostate

**A Ponteland couple are taking on a 600-mile charity cycle ride to raise funds for a Freeman Hospital fund.**



*Andrew and Claire Morgan in training for the charity ride. Photo courtesy of nickclarkimaging.com*

Solicitor Andrew Morgan and his school teacher wife Claire will cycle from John O'Groats to Ponteland in September in a fundraising drive for the hospital's Urology & Oncology Fund.

Their inspiration for the marathon 17-day ride has come from a major health scare for Andrew last year and Claire's impending retirement after 30 years of teaching. Andrew, 54, a partner at Nicholson & Morgan, was diagnosed last year with prostate cancer but happily had a successful robotic prostatectomy operation and is recovering well.

Claire, 55, is retiring at the end of July, having spent the last 21 years at Darras Hall First School. The start date for the charity cycle ride – September 2 – would have been her first day back at school next term.

Andrew said: "I found out about my prostate cancer as a result of my older brother who was diagnosed with the same disease 12 months before me. He has had exactly the same operation as me and I am pleased to say that he has made a good recovery as well."

"I only went to get a check up because of that and I am quite sure that I would not have done so otherwise. Part of the aim of this campaign is to try and get as many men as possible who are in their late 40s and early 50s to go and get checked out. In the first instance there is a very straightforward PSA blood test which can be carried out at a GP surgery."

The couple, from Darras Road, will average around 35 to 40 miles per day on their route through Scotland before being joined by friends Lesley Adams, Jane Sym, David and Judith Allan, Dan and Joyce Whaley and David and Rachel Tilley in Edinburgh for the final few days.

The father-of-two, chairman of Ponteland Cricket Club, has set up a JustGiving page at [justgiving.com/pedallingforprostate](http://justgiving.com/pedallingforprostate) for donations and details of the route can be found at [pedallingforprostate.co.uk](http://pedallingforprostate.co.uk)

## Schoolgirls run and ride for children's charity



**Two Ponteland schoolgirls are taking part in a 45-mile running and cycling challenge to raise cash for a North East children's charity.**

Ponteland Community High School students Keira Jones, 14, and Laura Mould, 15, will run 15 miles and cycle 30 miles in a gym in a bid to raise £400 for Children North East.

Keira, of Milbourne, said: "Me and Laura felt as though we should give back in life, we wanted to do something for charity and with plenty of research we found Children North East."

"We looked into it a lot and saw they help children and young people in poverty, but the charity itself does not get much recognition. So we both thought it would be a great opportunity to help raise awareness and some money for children less fortunate than us. It is also a local based charity so we knew that the money we raise will go to a good cause."

Keira and Laura have a JustGiving page for donations at [justgiving.com/lkfundraiser](http://justgiving.com/lkfundraiser) and a Facebook page at [facebook.com/KeiraAndLaurasFundraiser](https://facebook.com/KeiraAndLaurasFundraiser)



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## GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Council approved a grant of £300 towards the cost of maintenance of the churchyard at Milbourne.

## PROJECTS REPORT

### River bank repairs

This work will be carried out in July.

### Street information signs

Further requests for advertising on the back of the paper maps had been received.

### Repairs to second timber footbridge

The order for this work has been placed and the work will be carried out between July and the beginning of September.

### Annual Audit for 2012-13

The Council approved the Audit Return for 2012-13 which had to be submitted to the Council's external auditors by 15 July.

### Memorial Hall project

The Council considered a report relating to the proposal to build new offices at the back of the Memorial Hall. Planning permission has been received and approval was required to obtain firm prices from a quantity surveyor in order to ascertain how much the project would cost and to carry out a cost benefit analysis. It was agreed that alternatives should be examined and it was agreed to defer this decision until September to allow examination of other premises.

### Millennium Bridge cleaning

The Council had been seeking quotes for painting and cleaning of the Millennium Bridge. The quotes received were felt to be too high and a report was considered which outlined the results of a recent inspection. This showed that there was a need for immediate cleaning work and it was also necessary to clear the concrete of algae and the like. The Council agreed to have the work carried out this year and obtain approval from the Environment Agency if necessary.

### Monitoring of slope at Fox Covert

Concerns had been raised about the stability of the slope above the river wall

at Fox Covert Lane. An inspection had been carried by the Council's consulting engineers and no obvious sign of movement could be observed. However, in view of the concerns raised, it was suggested that a monitoring system be established, initially at six monthly intervals. The Council approved expenditure of £2,350 to enable this monitoring to be carried out this year and it was noted that there could be annual expenditure in subsequent years.

## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTERS

The Council registered their objections to a proposal relating to community newsletters like Pont News & Views which would mean that it could no longer be published. They also agreed to write to the Prime Minister, Mr E Pickles MP (Department for Communities and Local Government) and the local MP Guy Opperman seeking re-consideration of the proposal.

## TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

Councillors were asked to submit suggestions of what they would wish to see on the Council's website.

## CIVIC SERVICE

Councillors were reminded that it had been necessary to postpone the Civic Service scheduled for 19 May due to low attendance figures. This had partly been due to the proximity to the elections and also clashes with other Ponteland events. A report was presented by the Deputy Mayor requesting the Council to consider various options in relation to the event which included continuing with the service in its present form, having a church service with afternoon tea, holding only a church service or cancelling altogether. It was agreed to cancel the service altogether after a nine to three vote in favour of the cancellation.

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Peter Jackson reported that following the elections there was a new administration at the County Council and

he assured the Town Council that he and his colleagues would be working hard to ensure Ponteland received a fair share of services from the County Council. The next few months would be a busy time with the Core Strategy and with certain planning applications being considered in July/August time. He agreed to keep the Council informed about when these meetings were being held. Councillor Jackson also reported that discussions were ongoing in relation to the crossing control at the Darras Hall First School and an advert was to be placed in Pont News & Views for a part time post to carry out this work. Councillor Jones reported that she still had an interest in the Ageing Well project and she reported on the 'Step into Spring' event held in Ponteland recently that had been well attended. She also reported that the local County Councillors were allocating some of their allowance towards a new 14 seater bus with disabled access for use as the Hopper bus but also to be used by schools etc.

## MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor reported on a very successful Party in the Park event held on Sunday 9 June. He reminded Councillors that the annual bowls match with Ponteland Bowling Club would be held on Friday 14 June. The Music in the Park event is to be held on Sunday 30 June and Councillors were asked to volunteer to help out on the day. The Mayor reported on an idea he had for a display at the Memorial Hall the week before Remembrance Sunday in 2014 for families to display their medals and memorabilia of their relatives who fought in the First World War. It was hoped this could be open to the public and it would also be very interesting for the schools.

*This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council's meeting held on June 12.*





Photo by Trevor Walker

# British Eventing comes to Kirkley

**Organisers of the first in a series of planned equestrian competitions at Kirkley Hall said it was a hit with competitors and spectators alike.**

The new British Eventing One Day Event, held on Sunday June 9, saw riders from as far afield as Scotland and Yorkshire competing in the three disciplines of dressage, show jumping and cross country at BE80, BE90 and BE100 level.

Vice Principal of the Kirkley Hall campus, Marcus Clinton, said: "We were delighted with the inaugural running of the Kirkley Hall Horse Trials. We were blessed with fine weather and big crowds turned out to enjoy the competition.

"The event went very well - we were full with entries and everything ran extremely smoothly. It was a pleasure to welcome so many riders from Northumberland and surrounding counties including many from Scotland and Yorkshire.

"We have received very good feedback, particularly about how wonderful the cross country course rode and looked and the lovely atmosphere on the day. It was good to see so many local people enjoying watching the competition and visiting Kirkley."

The Northumberland College venue's first Affiliated Dressage event follows on Saturday June 29 and will see competitors compete on a new indoor riding surface in what will be a monthly fixture.

Marcus, a British Show Jumping Association Judge, added: "The new events will form part of a regular show calendar. They will provide the opportunity for riders of all levels to compete and develop, as well as supporting youngsters and emerging talent which is central to the college's mission."



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## PONTELAND MP DONATES BOOK PROCEEDS FOR BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman has donated the first royalties from his book on prison reform to the NHS hospital which saved his life from a brain tumour.

The MP presented Neil Kitchen, the consultant neurosurgeon who operated on him, with a cheque for £650. The surgeon treated Mr Opperman at the National Hospital for Neurosurgery and Neurology at Queen's Square in May 2011.

The cheque handover was made in the Central Lobby in the House of Commons, Westminster, on the exact spot where Guy had collapsed on April 26th 2011 due to an undiagnosed meningioma. Guy raised the money out of the proceeds of his book, *Doing Time*, which was published in 2012, setting out his ideas for helping to reduce reoffending amongst prisoners.

Guy said: "My first royalty cheque has come through and I have always made it clear that I would be handing over all the proceeds to the National Brain Appeal. All proceeds from book sales, after printing and publishing costs, are going to this wonderful charity that supports brain tumour research."

Mr Kitchen added: "Guy has made a full recovery and it is wonderful to seeing him looking so well. It is also good to see him continuing to support the research and work of the neurosurgery team at the National Hospital. We will put the money raised to good use."

## Developing a vision for the future the key focus for Ponteland Business Network

*By Charles Sellers  
Chairman, Northumberland Business Network*

**The key focus of the newly formed Ponteland Business Network is on developing a vision for the future.**

The Steering Group, with representatives of 20 businesses, is taking an in depth review of the aspirations for business facilities and resources, housing, schools and education, health facilities, transportation, environmental considerations, public services, infrastructure, leisure and recreation and tourism required.

Once the process is completed, expected in late June, the objectives of the group will become clear and thus enable a strategy to deliver.

Part of the strategy will be to provide input into the Neighbourhood Planning Group to ensure a positive contribution from the business community whilst ensuring a balanced approach from all parties. The Network has had assurances that the Neighbourhood Planning Group will be more conducive and receptive to opposing views to the No Campaign re residential planning and steps are being taken to seek those with expertise that can add value and thus contribution.

PBN has already sought and gained clear information and guidelines on the planning process in early June and after a blind survey, an overwhelming majority of the Steering Group support the initiative to instigate the setting up of a Community Trust, hopefully initially funded by Lugano Development Company.

It is hoped that work can commence in contributing to the Neighbourhood Plan and the Community Trust during the month of July.

PBN is keen to engage with the identified 663 businesses in the area and although names and addresses are on record it is hoped that these businesses will come forward with their contact details. From current responses it is clear that business people are also welcome and encouraged to participate.

Ponteland Business Network has been set up on LinkedIn to encourage open and greater communication with both Matt Gray and myself, responding to all requests and enquiries. Find us at: [linkedin.com/groups/Ponteland-Business-Network-4823361/about](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Ponteland-Business-Network-4823361/about)

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## PONTELAND RNLI LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

**The Ponteland RNLI Ladies Luncheon Club is looking to attract new members.**

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month in the Memorial Hall at 12noon for 12.30pm where we enjoy a two course lunch together with a guest speaker. Why not give us a try? If you are interested please contact Secretary Janet Musson on (01661) 824880.



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# Your letters

The Editor  
Pont News & Views



**Regular correspondent Muriel Sobo challenges the Town Council to improve its communication and consultation in this month's letters...**

## More consultation and debate needed

**Congratulations to our five new Town Councillors - Sue Johnson, Lesley Noble, Christine Greenwell, veteran Richard Dodd and young Adam Shanley!**

Now six men and six women so why are the mayor and his deputy both men? Equality would give a position to each sex.

What will be our Town Council's programme for the next four years? We never read any manifestoes, the councillors make no pitch to the electors and we are left entirely in the dark. Last year they collected £336,000 from our Council Tax and we have no say in how it is spent.

Let us have some democracy, some consultation, some debate and then perhaps there will be fewer blunders in the future. In this last year the council has spent more than £7,000 on an unwanted path to open onto the West Road in a very dangerous position despite protests from Friends of the Park and others.

They have altered the sculpture on Coates Green so much that it is now composed of three different kinds and colour of stone and is a visual disaster. There are others.

Take a look at how other town councils consult their electors. Keswick got Lottery money to hand out questionnaires in a variety of public places as well as online and from the responses will formulate a five year plan. They have a population of just over 7,000.

Hexham is promoting an impetus for change through the local press and activists. Morpeth is an historic market town and is seeking residents' opinions and input into the town's future. If our council consulted with the residents before landing the finished plans in front of them we would be further on with a number of different projects.

The Nathaniel Lichfield plans for regeneration in 2005 gave four options but our Parish Council together with Castle Morpeth Borough Council decided on the nuclear option of demolition and it resulted in the biggest turn out for a public protest meeting in Ponteland. It never got off the ground.

The next episode in 2009 was to vote for a preferred option from two proposals for regeneration so we voted for the least bad with the promise of community consultation. There were obvious flaws such as a community hub and the building of yet another care home on the library site and there has been no consultation with anyone, community, shop owners or leaseholders or even the County Council by the developer. That proposal has now possibly turned to dust.

The Town Council spent months last year, 2012, concocting a Town Plan without any input from residents so that the public meeting to approve the plan turned into a very definite refusal with the Mayor and Councillors pilloried for their efforts. Always back to square one.

Another plea. Websites vary enormously but Ponteland Town Council's is not user friendly. Factually inaccurate on the history, almost all the information has to be accessed through another website but the one bit of information, the latest planning applications, that we need to read regularly, is not available anywhere.

Why is the cover of the latest Pont News not shown on the home page and then it can be clicked on immediately from there? Many people say they don't get a copy delivered since they live out in Prestwick or on farms so this would be an alternative. For an idea of how it could look check out Morpeth Town Council's website. It is both informative and welcoming. A good website, easy to use, visually interesting and updated frequently is a must.

**Muriel Sobo**  
*Beech Court, Ponteland*

## Interesting ideas worth considering

**Mrs Sobo is known for her work in the community and I always read her views on Ponteland with interest. Her letter contains some interesting ideas and I am replying on a personal basis.**

There is an explanation why no manifestos were issued by candidates for the Town Council.

The Conservative Party fielded 12 candidates for the Town Council election that was due to take place on May 2. Each candidate wrote an election address and leaflets were made ready for distribution. No other party, however, put up a candidate and nobody stepped forward as an Independent. The County Council ruled therefore that there was no election contest and the 12 candidates for the Town Council were elected unopposed.

The election address leaflets containing candidates' views and urging residents to vote were not distributed because there was no contest to vote in.

The names and contact details of the Town Councillors who were elected unopposed are already on the Ponteland Town Council website but I like the suggestion that more information about councillors could be made known and that further research of residents views could be considered.

Town Councillors are all volunteers with Ponteland's interests at heart. The Town Council meets on the second Wednesday of the month, the meetings are open to the public and are attended by residents and journalists. The minutes of the meetings are available to the public on the website and in Ponteland Library. In addition, a report based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting is printed in Pont News.

Further information about the Town Council is provided by the Mayor in the Annual Report to the Local Electors. Residents are welcomed at the meeting and expenditure is referred to in the report.

**Coun Carl Rawlings**  
*Ponteland Town Council*

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.

**August issue deadlines:** The July issue will be delivered on Wednesday July 31. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday July 15. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the August issue.



## Lack of consultation claims unfounded

**As to the apparent lack of consultation, may I draw attention to the way that three significant items have been and are being dealt with?**

The Merton Way Regeneration brief was developed by Ponteland Community Partnership, approved by the community, the developer selected by the community and endorsed by the Town Council. Its further progress has been obstructed mainly by the County Council.

A draft local plan was prepared by the Town Council presented for comment by the community, rejected and withdrawn.

A Neighbourhood Plan Group has been established by the Town Council with many representatives from the community and is actively seeking information from and the views of the community. This has been, is being and will be reported through the pages of Pont News. The resultant document will be approved or rejected by a referendum.

The Mayor's annual report sets out many of the activities of the Town Council, its vision, its aims and future plans. This can be read online and for anyone attending the annual meeting a hard copy was available. Minutes and agendas are available online for both the full council and the planning committee, which are always open to the public.

Copies of Pont News go by post to houses not covered by deliveries.

The opportunity is available every four years for the community to express its views on the way the Town Council affairs have been conducted. We were returned unopposed.

This response is my personal view and is not from the Council.

**Coun Robin Ramsay MBE**  
*Ponteland Town Council*

## Thanks to retiring councillors... and welcome to their replacements

**David Butler, with his letter in your last issue, took the opportunity to thank all those who have appreciated his efforts in past years.**

I think that all of us should thank him – and all the other retiring Councillors – for their work on our behalf. David has been an assiduous Chairman of the Town Council's Planning Committee for several years and has always carried out the role with tact, consideration and expertise.

On behalf of the Civic Society I join with him in welcoming the new Councillors and wish them well in the future.

**Philip Ham**  
*Chairman, Ponteland Civic Society*



## You've made your point – now take the campaign banners down

**Cheviot View, the approach to the attractive town of Ponteland from Newcastle, has been marred for a long time by a succession of banners looking like for sale boards and giving a decidedly negative impression to the traveller.**

Whilst the desire of those residents to express concern over developments which might do damage to our environment is to be commended, this display is itself immediately damaging. Owners who need to sell their property now will find that purchasers keep away or become doubtful as to the wisdom of buying.

Had the original builders of these houses east of Clickem Bridge been desirous of preserving the environment and respectful of the pre-war Restriction of Ribbon Development legislation, development of Ponteland in this direction would never have happened.

Then, however, the pass seems to have been sold and the argument for house building within the boundary formed by Rotary Way strengthened.

It is time that those SAY NO boards were taken down and objectors to this extension to the town concentrated on preparing their objections at the public inquiry when it is announced, possibly years from now.

**John M Gill**  
*Darras Road, Ponteland*

## What is the point of the Darras Hall Estates Committee?

**Would someone please advise not only me but all the residents of Darras Hall what does the Estates Committee actually do and why do we have to pay them money each year, this year £28.**

My understanding is that this august body are supposed to uphold the original bye-laws established to maintain the standards of building and frontage of houses on the estate. Sadly, when walking around the estate it is patently obvious that the bye-laws are being continuously ignored and the Estates Committee does nothing about it. A walk down Darras Road proves the point.

Reading the published accounts, it seems that the committee is cash rich, spends a lot of money on admin and wages, yet does nothing.

Is it not time that this self-perpetuating quango was wound down and the "protection" of Darras Hall was left to our democratically elected Town and County Councillors?

**John Worth**  
*Address supplied*

## Closing schools full of 'outsiders' could address traffic chaos

**Could I respectfully invite the Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council and Guy Opperman MP to see the dangers the school run traffic cause Ponteland residents before anyone is killed by this situation?**

I have been campaigning and emailing my concerns to both for over three years now and there have now been almost 30 near miss incidents involving children on Thornhill Road that I am aware of.

Councillor Richard Dodd has recently funded a partial yellow line, time restrictions and residents parking bays on Thornhill Road. I would again like to personally thank Richard for this work which I am sure is greatly appreciated by all of Ponteland's residents.

However I would argue that a large proportion of cars have simply moved higher up Thornhill Road and into other streets such as Kirkley Drive, Beechwood Place and Ashbrooke and Rowan Drive as a result.

I counted the cars driving up Thornhill Road past the one way junction at the shops on 5th March at school times and there were a staggering total of 502 vehicles! The above mentioned streets suffer the same problems at school times as the Meadow Court resident wrote about last month. An ambulance recently couldn't get down Kirkley Drive at school time, and if a fire engine were ever needed at school times lives would be endangered.

Why can these school run dangers not be robustly tackled in the same manner as by North Tyneside Council, which warns drivers, fining them and, if they commit the same parking offence within 12 months, they risk having their vehicles towed away.

Is it time to close one first school and one middle school in Ponteland as we presently have 1,590 out of area pupils in our five schools. These out of area pupils attending our schools do not in my opinion benefit local residents in any way whatsoever, but this ongoing situation endangers lives, when cars mount, drive and park on our paths, fail to stop at our crossing, and obstruct local streets.

Another option could be for some of the considerable sum of money these out of area pupils bring into the education system (almost £4,000 per pupil I believe) to be invested each year into additional parking spaces and on safe drop off points etc.

Come on Northumberland County Council, I would argue that you have a duty of care to address this situation and a starting point would be a site visit would it not?

**Janet Dakers**  
*Bell Villas, Ponteland*

# What's on...

## Music in the Park: Sunday June 30th

Bring a picnic and enjoy a free afternoon's entertainment at Ponteland Town Council's Music in the Park event. BBC weatherman Paul Mooney is once again compering, with acts Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel Band, singer Sonia Michelle and Ponteland Community Band. The popular annual event is being held at Ponteland Park on Sunday June 30 from 3pm to 6pm. See event poster on p13 opposite.

## Ponteland U3A July meeting

Ponteland U3A monthly speaker on Wednesday July 3rd is Bill Saunders whose subject is The Cooperative Movement. Our August speaker on August 7th is Steve Lennon, who will tell us about the Ocean Youth Trust North. Our meetings start at 2pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Visitors welcome.

## 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 July 5th, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see [ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12](http://ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12)

## 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 July 6th.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday July 8th is Dr Peter Jones who will talk on "Ancient Athens, the world's first and last democracy". 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.

## 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.

## 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). Visitors' fee £3 (includes tea/coffee and biscuits). Further information from Carol Bird (01661) 881395.

## Merton Hall events

A day's outing is planned for July 25th, going to Howton Hall, returning via Chollerford for tea. The cost will be approximately £11. Don't miss out - you'll have to wait till September for the next trip. Contact: Merton Hall (01661) 872917 for details. Don't forget Merton Hall is a great place to meet new and old friends, read the papers and have a cuppa its only 30p and the second cup is free (Monday to Saturday morning). Have fun, keep fit and flexible with chair based exercise every Monday, 11am till 11.45am, no need to book just come and join in for £1.50. Merton Hall would also like to say thank you to Toll House Hairdresser, Harry Roberts, for his kind gift to mark his 21st year in Ponteland.

## St Mary's Summer Festival: July 25-28

St Mary's Summer Festival takes place at the end of this month. This year it lasts four days - Thursday July 25th to Sunday July 28th. Opening hours are 10am to 5pm each day. It will include a flower festival based on the Lindisfarne Gospels in the church, an art exhibition in the church hall and displays in the vicarage garden. Entertainment for children includes a calligrapher and "Meet the Saxons" on Friday afternoon and there will be performances by St Mary's Choir on Friday evening, Ponteland Community Band on Saturday and Ponteland Ladies' Choir on Sunday. More details at [www.pontelandstmary.co.uk](http://www.pontelandstmary.co.uk) or by calling (01661) 824470. See full article on page 16.

## Ponteland Repertory Society Big Pantomime Weekend: July 27-28

Are you a beautiful princess?  
A handsome prince?  
A pantomime dame?  
What about the fairy?  
Perhaps the wicked villain?  
Maybe you'd be happy just to be a villager?  
Join us for a special panto

workshop on Saturday July 27th from 1pm to 5pm at Darras Hall First School. Practice your skills and learn some new ones, try out the script and pick up some great tips from Simon Sladen, pantomime expert and writer of our November production, Sleeping Beauty. Auditions for Sleeping Beauty take place on Sunday 28th July from 1pm. Don't miss this chance to work with a real pantomime expert and make some new friends. Contact [caroledavies9@gmail.com](mailto:caroledavies9@gmail.com) or telephone (01661) 871161 for more details.

## 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.

## Tyneside Vagabonds Cycling Club Coaching Sessions

Fancy being the next Bradley Wiggins? Cycling coaching for children aged 6+. Beginners and intermediate bike skill sessions are held every Saturday at Ponteland High School car park on Callerton Lane from 8.45am. Just bring your bike and a helmet. Cost £3. Contact 07534 933771 for more information.



# MUSIC IN THE PARK

Sunday 30 June - 3pm to 6pm  
Ponteland Park

Opening by: **BBC weatherman**

**Paul Mooney**

Music from:

**Sonia Michelle**

**Rendezvous Jazz Band**

**North Tyneside Steel Band**

**Ponteland Community Band**

Bring a picnic and enjoy a fantastic afternoon's outdoor entertainment with friends and family.

In the event of poor weather, the event will be held at the Memorial Hall.

**FREE  
EVENT**



# Warning after spate of burglaries

By PC Rob Anderson  
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



**In the period between 12th May and 12th June we have had 11 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.**

These break down to the following offences:

- two damages to shops
- one theft
- one fraud
- six burglaries to houses
- one theft from shop.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the offences.

In the last few weeks we have seen the beginning of a spate of burglaries to houses. Four of these burglaries occurred on the same night, in the early hours. This would suggest a

team of travelling criminals have visited Ponteland from out of town.

These opportunists look for easy targets, open doors, ground floor windows or open garages. Please ensure you lock your doors before going to bed on an evening; the easier we make it for them, the more they will return.

If you see anything suspicious please report it to the police on the first occasion possible. The sooner we respond, the better chance we will have to catch them or prevent them from coming back.

We have had some incidents regarding dogs not being kept under control or on their leads.

You know your own dog and how they react to people or other animals so it is your responsibility to keep them under control. No one wants to see their animal injured or killed through someone else's inconsideration.

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 Rob Anderson 6th July 11.30am–12.30pm Co-op, Broadway
- CSO Jill Ruddick 20th July 9.30am–10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland

- PC Lee Davison 27th July 11.30am–12.30pm at Belsay village shop

We also have engagement days at these venues and dates:

- 17th July 1pm–3pm Stamfordham/Belsay.
- 18th July 10am–12noon Merton Way/1pm–3pm Broadway

Please come along and have a chat to get to know us.

## PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL SEEKS NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Ponteland Memorial Hall committee is currently looking for new members to be part of a team who oversee the running of the hall.**

The role of a committee member does not require a significant amount of time and new members will become a part of the general committee who meet quarterly, with term of office lasting three years.

The hall is a fantastic community facility used by many local organisations. We have representatives from these groups who hire the hall but would welcome new, enthusiastic faces with fresh ideas. Please email the secretary for further information at [info@pmh.co.uk](mailto:info@pmh.co.uk)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## WARNING OVER ROGUE DOORSTEP TRADERS

**A fresh warning has been issued about doorstep fish sellers believed responsible for distraction burglaries.**

The cold callers have been targeting areas like Ponteland with a high population of elderly residents and use intimidating sales techniques.

The fish is often misdescribed, mislabelled or unlabelled, overpriced and sometimes underweight. Often, they will empty out a consumer's freezer of other goods, fill it with their fish and charge several hundred pounds for doing so.

There may be links to distraction burglary type incidents, as they often enter the consumer's home by offering to take the fish inside and traders have been reported to have taken blank cheques from consumer's cheque books.

Northumberland County Council Trading Standards is working closely with Scambusters and is urging members of the public to be vigilant and report:

- details of any traders cold calling or door knocking in an area
- details of any vehicles linked to the sellers, registration numbers, logos or sign writing, make/model/colour of vehicle
- descriptions of traders seen
- leaflets or flyers handed out
- any labels or markings on the packs bought on the doorstep
- method of payment as cheques, card payments and bank transfers can be traced
- any paperwork left.



## NEW CHARITY RAISES NEARLY £2,500 AT INAUGURAL CONCERT

**A newly launched Ponteland charity has raised nearly £2,500 for The Great North Air Ambulance in its first fundraising evening.**

Pont Charity Group held their first concert at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Tuesday June 4th to meet their objective of supporting the Poor and the Afflicted.

There was a good attendance, including Mayor Peter Cowey, Deputy Mayor Carl Rawlings and a former Mayor to hear the excellent harmony of the male quartet Just 4 Men, and the well known and enjoyable songs of the Soprano, Marjorie Archer.

After expenses Pont Charity Group were able to send a cheque for £2,440 to The Great North Air Ambulance resulting from the concert and raffle. We would like to express our thanks to all who made this possible.

Undoubtedly the success of our first concert will encourage others to attend the next one on October 26th, where we will have the Grainger Singers with an equally varied programme for their enjoyment in support of Children N.E.

## LITTER PICK: SATURDAY JULY 13

**Volunteers are being sought for a pre-Northumbria In Bloom litter pick on Saturday July 13th.**

The rendezvous point is 10am at the Memorial Hall car park on Darras Road. Equipment and gloves will be provided and refreshments available.



Photo by Trevor Walker

## Church exhibition charts rise of the red kite

**A project responsible for the re-introduction of nearly 100 red kites to the region was the subject of an exhibition at St Mary's Church.**

A stunning glass kite was accompanied by textual information and images by professional photographer Kaleel Zibe showing community involvement in the Northern Kites Project.

The project was responsible for the re-introduction of 94 red kites in this core area between 2004 and 2009. In 2006 red kites began to breed in the region for the first time after an absence of 170 years.

The exhibition ran at St Mary's Church from May 14th to 22nd and on Saturday July 6th a red kite watching event is being held from 10am until 2pm on Kite Hill in the Derwent Country Park (follow the way markers from Winlaton Mill car park). FoRK volunteers will be on hand to point out red kites nesting. More information can be found at [friendsofredkites.org.uk](http://friendsofredkites.org.uk)

## PONTELAND LIONS SUPPORT VITAL LOCAL CHARITIES

**This year Ponteland Lions have used funds raised at their Annual Swimathon to support two vital North East charities: Charlie Bear for Cancer Care is based at the Northern Centre for Cancer Care in the Freeman Hospital and The Bubble Foundation, which operates from the RVI.**

A cheque for £1,100 was presented to the Charlie Bear fundraising manager Pauline Buglass. A second cheque for £1,100 was presented to Gill Johnston, fundraising manager for The Bubble Foundation, one of only two such centres in the UK.

Ponteland Lions would like to thank all the local young people who took part in the Swimathon, together with their parents, teachers and youth leaders for enabling them to support such worthy charities.

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A floral display at St Mary's Church from the 2011 festival. Photo by Barry Pells.

# Music, flowers and exhibitions at St Mary's four day festival

By The Reverend Peter Barham

**Four days of events and displays are taking place at the end of July to mark the biennial St Mary's Summer Festival.**

The highlights of the festival, taking place from Thursday July 25th to Sunday July 28th, include:

- Flower festival at St Mary's Church from 10am to 5pm each day based on the Lindisfarne Gospels
- Art exhibition in the church hall by 12 artists from the Network of Northumberland Artists, with paintings on sale, and displays from Ponteland Photographic Society and the Embroiderers Guild
- Displays about the Lindisfarne Gospels and material from Ponteland Local History Society, Richard Coates School and St Mary's Brownies in the church hall and vicarage garden marquee
- Refreshments in the church hall garden - coffee and scones; soup, jacket potatoes, sandwiches and quiche at lunchtime; tea and cakes; wine and beer.

We are raising money for the RNLI, West End Refugee Service and to refurbish the Church Hall. Admission to the Festival is free - and all are welcome.

More details at [pontelandstmary.co.uk](http://pontelandstmary.co.uk) or by calling (01661) 824470.

## Full event programme

### Wednesday July 24th

7pm - Official opening and private view of the art - starting in St Mary's Church. Tickets costing £7 will be on sale from the church office.

### Thursday July 25th

Everything open from 10am to 5pm

### Friday July 26th

Everything open from 10am to 5pm

10am to 2pm - calligraphy & illuminated letters, a drop in workshop for adults and children.

2pm to 4pm - Meet the Saxons, their lives, clothes and weapons - a ticketed event for children cost £3.

7.30pm - Concert by St Mary's choir. Tickets costing £5 will be on sale from the church office.

### Saturday July 27th

Everything open from 10am to 5pm

Ponteland Community Band perform in the vicinity of St Mary's at 1pm and 5pm. A free concert.

### Sunday July 28th

8am - Holy Communion

10am - Festal Eucharist. Preacher: The Rev. Dr. Barbara Chandler

12noon - Exhibitions open

3pm - Ponteland Ladies' Choir perform in church (free concert)

6.30pm - Festival Songs of Praise with Ponteland Churches Together and Newcastle West Deanery.



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\*\* Please quote Pont News and Views when making the appointment.  
No obligation consultation, further investigations may be necessary before any treatment commences.



Sisters Rachel Bowey-Bland, Becky Bowey-Tyler and Michelle Scott

## Sisters launch new 'modern and fresh' WI

### Three sisters are launching a new Women's Institute in Ponteland.

Becky Bowey-Tyler, Rachel Bowey-Bland and Michelle Scott got the idea after meeting the president of Tynemouth WI, Danielle Dunn, another mum at the school their children all attend.

Trainee maths teacher Becky, 32, will be president, Rachel, 39, treasurer and Michelle, 38, secretary.

Ponteland Village WI meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month at St Mary's Church Hall on Thornhill Road. The first meeting is on July 9th from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

Mother-of-three Becky, of Medburn, said: "The clear message of our WI is that we are a modern and fresh WI. We have an open door and want everyone to feel welcome.

"Our activities will be a mixture of fun activities, more serious speakers (always lighthearted though) and more traditional crafts made current and fun. It is aimed at women predominantly in their 30s and 40s but we have an open door, so anyone is welcome."

For more information contact Becky at: [pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com](mailto:pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com) or call 07814 734962.



## Church holds celebration weekend to mark 40th anniversary

**Ponteland United Reformed Church is celebrating its 40th birthday on the weekend of July 20th and 21st.**

It was in 1963 when an initial (Presbyterian) Service was held in Ponteland Memorial Hall. By the end of that year the former wooden Darras Hall Station building had been repaired, redecorated and adapted for worship and was in use.

In 1969 the site of Darras Hall Station and sidings were leased from the Estate Committee and the congregation resolved to build a new church.

The first service in the new building was held on 22nd July 1973. The service started with a procession from the church in the station building to the new church. After a formal "opening of the door", a dedication service took place presided over by the Moderator of the Northern Province of the United Reformed Church and attended by all the local clergy and a large congregation.

Over the years our Ministers have been the Revd. David Hannen, Revd. Kevin Watson, Revd. Philip Gray and the Revd. Joan Ross is our current minister.

On the afternoon of Saturday July 20th the church will be open and we will have displays of its history and activities and events which are held here. Afternoon tea will be provided accompanied by homemade baking from 2pm onwards.

A Service of Celebration on Sunday July 21st at 10am will be led by minister Revd. Joan Ross accompanied by the Revds. Philip Gray and Kevin Watson.

We remember with thanks all the support and cooperation we have had from the churches and the wider community over the 40 years and invite our friends to join us during our weekend of celebration.



### 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**





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# Plenty to do in Ponteland for older residents

An event held to promote activities for older Ponteland residents attracted 150 people and has boosted attendance at local interest groups and exercise classes.

The health and wellbeing event at St Mary's church hall on Saturday May 18th provided an opportunity for people to find out about local health, social and leisure activities, including tennis, carpet bowls, exercise classes, lunch clubs, social gatherings, photography, flower arranging, the Rotary Club, Friends of Kirkley Hall, U3A activities, health walks, Merton Hall and local community transport schemes.

Charitable and voluntary organisations including Age UK, Royal Voluntary Service, Alzheimer's Society, Valley Care, Northumberland County Blind Association and Carers Northumberland attended.

Residents signed up for volunteering opportunities on the day and since the event attendance figures at many interest groups and exercise classes have increased.

The Step into Spring event was organised by Ageing Well in Ponteland, a group of local people who have volunteered their time to support older people to stay active, connected and well.

To find out more about Ageing Well in Northumberland visit [adults.northumberland.gov.uk](http://adults.northumberland.gov.uk) or call 01670 394436.

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