

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Frosty reception for housing
developers at consultation day

Anxious wait for ruling
on bar bistro plan

Police warning over
bogus officials

Jubilee celebrations go off with a bang!



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Write: Cian creative pr, 5 East Boldon Road, Cleadon Village, SR6 7SH

Produced by Cian creative pr



Party in the Park bigger than ever

By Muriel Sobo

The families of Ponteland piled into the Park, mostly wearing two sweaters, anoraks and wellingtons after two days of unremitting rain when it was not only wet but grey and cold as well.

The Party was bigger than ever and the offering was great. Caroline Pryer, a Deputy Lieutenant of Northumberland and Head of the Middle School, opened proceedings and was followed on stage by North Tyneside Steel Band who certainly made things swing!

The Kielder Birds of Prey up in the top meadow were a big hit, the children's entertainer kept the young ones' attention, there were more fairground rides and most of the Ponteland societies had a presence.

There was food and drink, meeting up with old friends and it didn't rain. The Coates Middle School choir and orchestra entertained as well as accompanying the short service.

The Party is organised by the Churches Together and Andy Anderson from the Methodist Church was very pleased with the numbers and the weather and particularly wishes to thank Newcastle Airport and the Town Council for their support and all the other businesses who advertised or financed the Party.

Photos by Keith Robertson



Anxious wait for appeal decision on bar bistro

Residents face an anxious wait for a planning inspector's ruling on a controversial bid to open a bar and bistro in Ponteland village centre.

A hearing was held on May 30 in Hexham after the applicant appealed against the second refusal of planning permission for plans to turn the former Co-op and Wine Rack store at Bell Villas into a two storey wine bar and restaurant.

Members of Northumberland County Council's West Area Planning Committee rejected the application in February against their own officers' advice, saying it would result in the loss of existing retail floor space.

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

A county council spokeswoman said the decision of the planning inspector was due by mid-July.

VIEWS SOUGHT ON PLANNING BLUEPRINT

Views are being sought on a blueprint for the future development of Ponteland which aims to influence a county-wide strategic planning policy.

The 53-page Local Plan document has been drawn up by Ponteland Town Council over the past nine months and sets out its goals for improving the local infrastructure and addressing other issues including lack of affordable housing.

It has sections on roads, public transport, employment, housing, shopping, education, leisure, car parking and the environment, with ambitious targets including the creation of two new business parks, relocation of schools, building of a bypass and extension of the Metro system.

The Council approved the draft plan for consultation at its monthly meeting in June and comments are required by August 10 as the authority needs to have an input to the Northumberland County Council Issues and Options document which has a consultation deadline of August 15.

It is available to download from the Town Council website at pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk/News.html or a copy can be purchased from the office for £3.

Meanwhile Northumberland County Council is holding a public consultation event in Ponteland this week as part of a countywide tour to inform its Core Strategy planning policy framework.

The event is being held on Tuesday July 3 at Waitrose in Main Street from 2pm to 7pm. For more information visit:

www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=6270&article=2006



Charity sports hero David carries Olympic torch

Darras Hall man David Taylor has added another sporting achievement to his impressive list, after carrying the Olympic torch through Morpeth.

David was one of the 8,000 torch bearers taking part in the nationwide relay which has drawn huge crowds across the UK.

The 45-year-old, who works as a chef at St Oswalds Hospice in Gosforth, was nominated by volunteers at the hospice for his fundraising sporting achievements, including pushing day patient Rebecca Parslow in her wheelchair whilst carrying a fridge on his back at the Great North Run last year.

He has also taken part in the New York marathon, Kielder marathon, and London marathon, cycled from Lands End to John o' Groats and completed many coast to coast cycle rides.

The next challenge for father-of-one David, whose wife Jill runs the Jill Errington School of Dance, is climbing 20,000ft Tanzanian Mount Kilimanjaro next year in a bid to raise £4,000 for the hospice.

ONE HOUR A MONTH?

Ponteland Lions Club would like to thank publicly the friends who help us at the regular Lions Bookstall outside Waitrose on the last Saturday of the month (excluding December).

The Club raises on average £10,500 each year for very worthwhile causes, both locally and in the wider world, and of this in the region of £3,500 comes from our monthly bookstall. To help the Lions continue this work we need a handful of people who are fit and can spare one hour a month to help us set up and dismantle the bookstall.

If any readers aged from 16 to 60 would like to take the opportunity, please could they call Joan Fedoroff on (01661) 823336, John Morris on (01661) 823917 or Nick Jackson on (01661) 871303.

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GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Council approved two grant applications, one for Milbourne Church in the sum of £300 to assist with churchyard maintenance and one for Carers Northumberland for £120 to assist with the costs of running a monthly support meeting in Ponteland.

PROJECTS REPORT

Memorial Hall

Pre-application discussions were starting in respect of this project.

Coping stones at Waitrose Bridge

An application has been submitted to the Environment Agency. Once approval is given the works will be carried out.

Bridge redesign

Works have been delayed due to various events being held in the Park.

River Bank Repairs

A further meeting will be sought with the EA.

Street Information Signs

The two signs have been mounted onto the display boards. Prices were being sought for a dispenser for the sign on Main Street.

Skate Park

Grants have been made available for this project to go ahead. Plans are being drawn up to enable a planning application to be submitted.

Park path lighting project

Quotes are being sought for the design of the scheme based on preliminary layouts.

War Memorial

Various options have been prepared and Councillors were asked to examine these and submit their preference as soon as possible.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on May 21 and discussed various issues including works to be carried out by the Environment Agency and the private use of Ponteland Park.

DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

The Council considered a report relating to the various activities and celebrations held as part of the Diamond Jubilee, also detailed in the feature on p12-13.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Richard Dodd reported that there would be a Leisure Centre Users Group on 4 July.

He had attended the LMAPS meeting held on 12 June when it had been reported that an elderly lady had been caught out with contractors cutting her hedge for large amounts of money. The police would be very interested to hear of any instances of this. It was stated that Age UK offered a reasonably priced gardening service and this should be promoted in the area.

Negotiations are still ongoing with ISOS in relation to car parking spaces for residents of the Aged Persons bungalows.

Efforts are being made to resolve the problems in Brewery Lane. The road needed to be brought up to standard before NCC would adopt it. The Town Council is in the process of having bollards erected on this corner to attempt to stop parking.

Councillor Veronica Jones raised the lack of activities for older people at the Leisure Centre and it was hoped that the Centre

would become involved in the Northumberland Aging Well Programme. She also reported that following receipt of a petition from Councillor Cowey, yellow lines were being put down on Middle Drive on the Linden Way side. Councillor Jones felt that these lines were on the wrong side and this was to be taken up with NCC.

She also expressed concern about the proposed changes to the On and Off Street Parking Tariffs Structure which was out for consultation until June 21. Whilst parking was not charged for in Ponteland, this would still affect residents who shopped in areas such as Hexham and Morpeth. The web address to view the document was <http://trafficconsult.northumberland.gov.uk/>

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor reported on the Civic Service which had been held on Sunday May 27. He thanked everyone involved in the organisation of the event which had gone very well.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on June 13.



Warm reception for Ponteland's Civic Service

Civic leaders joined community groups of all ages in blazing sunshine for Ponteland's Civic Service.

Morpeth Pipe Band led the annual march from the Memorial Hall to the service at St Mary's Church conducted by The Reverend Peter Barham, Vicar of Ponteland, assisted by Rev Joan Ross and Rev Ian Suttie.

They were joined by the Boys Brigade, Army Cadets and representatives of a wide range of local organisations, including charities and clubs, along with

representatives of Northumbria Police, Kirkley Hall, Northumberland County Council and local churches.

The civic party included Ponteland's Mayor and Mayoress Peter and Sheila Cowey, the Chairman of Northumberland County Council Jim Smith, Mayor of Morpeth Mark Horton, Mayor of Blyth Town Council Kath Nisbet and representatives of Newbiggin and Amble Town Councils, in parades to and from the Memorial Hall, where guests enjoyed afternoon tea after the service on Sunday May 27.

Photo by Trevor Walker

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What's on...

Northumberland Fuchsia Society

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

Ponteland History Society Help Desk

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

County Council surgeries

Your local Northumberland County Councillors Richard Dodd, Peter Jackson, Veronica Jones and Eileen Armstrong are available to meet constituents on the first Saturday of every month

from 10am-11am at Waitrose supermarket, Ponteland and Broadway, Darras Hall. Their next surgery is on July 7.

Music in the Park

Sunday July 8 from 2pm to 5pm in Ponteland Park. Free entry with donations welcomed to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Trust Fund. Compered by the BBC's Paul Mooney with Sonia Michelle, Dunston Silver Band, Ponteland Community Band and music from all five schools. Bring a picnic and enjoy a fantastic afternoon's entertainment.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday July 9 is Geoff Hughes and his subject 'Songs & Stories of Northumberland'. 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 or on (01661) 872661.

Darras Hall WI

Our next meeting is on Thursday July 12 when the speaker will be Mrs Elizabeth Finch. Mrs Finch will tell us the story of Seaton Delaval Hall, and the competition will be "A Piece of Old China". Bring along a cup for the comp. and put it to good use by staying for a cuppa and a natter. The meeting will be held in the URC Hall, starting at 2pm. Visitors are very welcome.

Film show

July's Railway and Archive film show in 2012 follows on from our "Royalty and Railways" theme in May. On Saturday July 14 at 3pm and 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, we will have a programme from London. The Colonial Film Unit shows us how to catch a bus, architects discuss the Festival of Britain, and we will head down the tube and ride the trams. There is a minor sporting event happening in east London later in the summer - we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Great Eastern Railway Company, based in Stratford. Admission free, doughnuts in the interval.

Special service to say farewell to church organist

Shaun Turnbull, who has been St Mary's organist for the last year, will be moving this summer to be Assistant Director of Music for Blackburn Cathedral. The Vicar, Peter Barham, said: "This is a wonderful promotion for Shaun and a marvellous opportunity. We are grateful for all he has done with our musicians over the last year, and wish him well in his new position. The post of Director of Music for St Mary's is currently being advertised, and there have been some expressions of interests - we will continue to have fine music at our worship." There will be a special service of Choral Evensong in St Mary's at 6.30pm on Sunday July 15, and then a drink in the Vicarage garden and an opportunity to thank Shaun.

63rd Kirkheaton Show

Saturday July 21. Attractions include horse and pony classes, birds of prey, alpacas, children's races, Cumberland wrestling,

quoits, dogs, terriers and hound classes, home crafts and children's classes, vintage tractors and vehicles, children's fun fair, trade stands, homemade teas, licensed bar and the largest owl in the world - the European eagle owl. Gates open at 9am and after the day's events you can dance from 8pm until midnight in the main tent.

Free 'protect your wealth' seminar

Ponteland based financial planning consultants Lamb & Associates are holding a free seminar at Ponteland URC, Broadway, Darras Hall, at 10.30am on Tuesday July 24. The one hour seminar on wealth management will be followed by refreshments.

See advert on page 13.

Merton Hall bus trip

The next bus trip from Merton Hall is on Wednesday July 25 to Houghton Hall Garden Centre, Carlisle 10 - 4pm cost £10 each.

Ponteland's weekly market

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

Ponteland Netball

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

Ponteland Runners

Ponteland Runners are a local running group that meet and run around the Ponteland/Darras Hall area. We are an England Athletics Affiliated Club, with representatives at many local runs. We'd like to invite anybody, of any running standard, to join this friendly group. Please view www.PontelandRunners.org.uk for session details or for further information email secretary@PontelandRunners.org.uk or contact Chris or Sue Heppell on (01661) 860327.



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Paul Mooney

Music from:

Sonia Michelle

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Ponteland Community Band

All five local schools

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There will also be a bouncy castle, giant slide, food and refreshments.

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

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Your views on proposed housing schemes and school run traffic in this month's bumper letters...

Let's grab this opportunity to create a village centre to be proud of

Let us face facts, the population is growing and we need more affordable houses.

We all have our views about Ponteland but what is crucial is that the infrastructure we need for today and the future is built and it is attractive.

An attractive and vibrant centre is needed where people actually want to visit and wander round, whether they are shopping or not. When people visit a centre that is vibrant, then the whole area benefits economically. At the moment people go out of Ponteland to other centres.

So we need to look at other successful places in order to learn what sort of design and architecture we need. For example, who would have thought 20 years ago that people would actually visit Hartlepool for the day! But their relatively small marina development has been a great success.

Similar examples are the architecture and design in small areas of Bristol, Harrogate, Ilkley, Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, the new Morpeth development etc. Whilst places larger than Ponteland, they have managed to create small areas that people wish to visit.

Indeed, there are a few 'pockets' within Newcastle itself that have developed into vibrant places where people wish to visit. The people are here in our area - you only have to look at recent small café and restaurant developments in the area and how busy they can be but they have no other reason to stay and wander round - thereby spending more money.

One could also cite places like York which admittedly has had a long history and quaint infrastructure but people do 'flock' there to walk round

the attractive streets. In other words what we need is a design that has charm, architecturally pleasing, built to last, places to sit around, undercover arcades etc. whilst also retaining that 'village' feel. We could also link up any new design with our nice park to enhance that village feel.

It is no good building more houses without a centre to match people's needs. Surely it is not beyond developers such as Banks, MKP, Lugano, and Ponteland Community Partnership and local planning to come up with a design that can make Ponteland centre one that residents and any new housing developments proud of without spoiling the village feel. We have an opportunity - let's grab it.

Peter Sutcliffe, Middle Drive, Darras Hall

It's affordable housing Ponteland needs – not more mansions

As we were asked (and I hope not to fall out with my friends and acquaintances living throughout Ponteland) I've thought about the issue of housing development for some time and wanted to take this opportunity to raise a few views.

Quite honestly Ponteland doesn't require more mansions and executive housing, but what it does need is low cost affordable housing for families, for its community.

I know of several families who have lived here for all their lives, and their parents and so on, who when in social need are unable to obtain local authority accommodation and also whose sons and daughters are unable to afford housing here and are forced to live in the West End of Newcastle and Kingston Park begrudgingly (however I am not knocking these areas for their good features).

If it is ok for famous footballers

to influence housing development, then the local authority, housing associations and to a point property developers (some of whom live in Ponteland) should have some influence.

I work in housing and when one is adequately and comfortably housed it is perhaps human nature to take the right to be housed for granted.

Ponteland is not a small rural village, it is a large village/small town and it is too late to be concerned about housing development as this has already taken place. It was my understanding that to build houses improves the area and the value of the homes.

Of course there are many good things about living in Ponteland which is the reason why it is a popular place to live, but I am a believer that it can embrace diversity and equality for all, whilst retaining its character, positive qualities and opportunities.

Jane Darling-Smith, Rowan Drive, Ponteland

It's the County Council's Core Strategy that you need to comment on

Ponteland is at a crossroads. The Government's new Planning Policy Framework has encouraged developers to believe that Green Belt land may now be available to them, and various "consultations" and "planning days" have been held to sound out your views and persuade you of the "benefits".

You can of course turn up and say exactly what you think but remember: these so-called consultations are not the ones which matter; the one that does is the County Council's Core Strategy Issues and Options draft which is available for your comment up to the 15th of August (not September as

incorrectly stated last month). This document will determine how planning applications are to be dealt with in the future.

Ponteland Civic Society favours the use of brownfield sites and is opposed to piecemeal development on our surrounding Green Belt land. Recent proposals involve up to 1,500 houses and could lead to Ponteland being eventually joined up with Newcastle along the A696. We are unimpressed by promises of "improvements" to sports facilities etc., and neither do we see any real commitment to affordable housing.

Our local MP and Councillors are deeply sceptical, and the Community Partnership is rightly concerned with the infrastructure which would have to be provided to support these developments. Janet Dakers, in the last issue, has also drawn attention to the woefully inadequate car-parking arrangements in Ponteland which can only get worse unless they are addressed.

We think that Ponteland must above all be a sustainable community in which housing, jobs, infrastructure and amenities are all balanced in a sensible way; we don't want a preponderance of supermarkets, care homes, restaurants or any other facility which developers happen to think profitable.

There is now a unique opportunity for us all to influence the Core Strategy document and the chance may not recur for years to come. You can see a copy in the Library, together with Response Forms. It can be viewed online, and you can also comment, by going to:

http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy_io/csio

We would urge all of you, whether a member of the Civic Society or not, to have your say in the long-term interests of Ponteland. Of course, if you

do fancy joining the Society and helping us you would be most welcome; just ring (01661) 822225 or email us on: pontcivic@hotmail.co.uk

Philip Ham, Chairman,
Ponteland Civic Society

Developer's donation does not demonstrate commitment to Ponteland

I am sorry but the £154,000 'donation' from the Lugano Group to Northumberland County Council in return for planning permission granted for five executive homes in Runnymede Road does not demonstrate any commitment to me.

This appears to be a sweetener as the developers plan to destroy the green belt areas and wildlife corridors in Ponteland. How much will the county council get for more than 1,000 homes?

They would have us believe the funding - or donation as Banks and Lugano like to call it - is for significant community and environmental improvements including a major upgrade of sports and leisure facilities. How can they state this when they will be destroying the environment we live in?

Ponteland is one of the oldest historical places left in the North East and if Lugano and Banks get their way it will be destroyed.

I think all of the caring residents in Ponteland should get up a petition and take it en masse to Downing Street. If you are as annoyed as I am and would like to help with this and try to preserve Ponteland for future generations I would like to hear from you.

If we stand together we can try and prevent these housing schemes.

Christine Greenwell, Station Lodge, Station Cottages, Ponteland

Why are we subsidising Newcastle's education department?

I read with interest Janet Dakers' letter 'Road safety campaigner lays down the gauntlet' - June 2012 issue.

However, it is not just the Thornhill Road schools which cause parking and congestion problems; the same applies to the Callerton Lane and Broadway schools.

Rather than asking for more car parks, which I suspect are unlikely to be built, I would suggest that the schools limit their intake to pupils who walk or who use the buses, except for those with special circumstances.

I have been told that 40% of pupils come from Newcastle and that Newcastle City Council does not pay anything directly to Northumberland Council towards their education, so in effect Northumberland council tax payers are subsidising Newcastle City Council.

The current year's cost to Northumberland council tax payers for the county's Children and Education Services is over £46m. It would therefore help if Newcastle educated its own youngsters. The schools must not be greedy in wanting to fill every space.

Also there is wear and tear on the roads for which the residents pick up the bill. Unfortunately many vehicles (not just those ferrying children) park on the pavements and grass verges; as well as being a hazard to pedestrians it can be dangerous for the disabled, the visually impaired and buggy users.

Who cares? But these areas are not designed to take these weights and they then become unsightly and in need of repair.

A concerned Ponteland resident, (name and address supplied)

I bet Newcastle schools have the same problems with pupils travelling in

Janet Dakers makes many valid remarks in her contribution about school parking issues last month.

The fact that a huge percentage of pupils attending the Ponteland schools are from outside the village is fascinating, though not a surprise, when the detail is presented so clearly.

I wonder if the Freedom of Information Act can also reveal how many Ponteland and Darras Hall children attend the schools of Newcastle; usually fee paying schools. They must cause problems similar to those of Ponteland next to their choice of school.

Ironical?

David Halliday, Ponteland

Grass cutting service will soon be back on schedule

I thought it might be useful to update your readers on the problems we have experienced with early season grass cutting in the Ponteland area.

Isos Housing has recently employed a new contractor, Vale Contract Services, for all its grounds maintenance work across the North East.

We know some residents of Ponteland have experienced delays to the normal grass cutting schedule near their homes, and we apologise for this.

The Vale teams have been delayed as a result of heavy rainfall during April, and the extra time needed to cut the resultant long grass has put them further behind schedule. We also found some grassed areas had been omitted from our mapping information, but this is now being corrected.

Extra workers and machines have been assigned to the Isos contract, so we would please ask that residents be patient, and trust that Vale are doing

everything possible to get back on schedule.

If anyone has concerns about grass cutting or other grounds maintenance issues around our homes, they can contact Isos customer services on 0300 300 1505 when we will of course do our very best to help.

Kath Glen, Housing Manager (Northumberland), Isos Housing

So who founded Ponteland? The Romans or the Normans?

For many years I have accepted that the word 'Ponteland' was originated by the Normans and that it was 'the crossing of the Eland'.

Over the years it was eventually to be changed so that the river became the Pont and this is without question now the name.

There is, however, a place north east of Naples called Pontelandolfo and this leads me to suggest that our village may have been named by some homesick Roman long before the Normans came to Britain. Roman soldiers were here for a long time!

Perhaps information or comment from someone with other views could be interesting?

Fred Fennel, Parklands, Ponteland

Can we have a litter bin outside the Leisure Centre please?

Please could we have a litter bin (or even two) somewhere outside the Leisure Centre? The nearest is up at the children's playground.

Residents living nearby often have a litter picking session because it looks so unsightly, but neither the Leisure Centre staff nor the Council pay any attention to our request.

M Richardson, Fairney Edge, Ponteland

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



Ponteland sparkles in Diamond Jubilee celebrations

Ponteland certainly knows how to party – and the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee saw nearly a full week of celebrations as the community came together to mark her magnificent achievement.

Around 1,500 people converged on Coates Green for the lighting of the Beacon and firework display on Bank Holiday Monday night, while 42 organisations contributed to the four day exhibition at the Memorial Hall which was also well attended.

Various other events held in and around Ponteland to mark the Jubilee included church services, teas at Merton Hall, a big lunch at St Mary’s Church Hall, while The Diamond Inn had a packed programme of entertainment.

The Loyal Address, a unique gift for Her Majesty signed by more than 7,000 Ponteland residents, was presented to the Duchess of Northumberland by a delegation including the Town Mayor, Coun Robin Ramsay and children from all five schools at Alnwick Castle on June 6.

Coun Ramsay, who led the organisation of the events on behalf of Ponteland Town Council, said: “From the Loyal Address, to the Memorial Hall exhibition, to the Big Lunch, to the firework display – and all the other events in between – we witnessed the biggest joint community effort for many years. It was a fitting tribute to The Queen which we should all be proud of.”

Photos by Trevor Walker and Keith Robertson





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As life expectancy continues to rise, many of us will begin to need assistance in our everyday lives to help us maintain our independence. Helen McArdle Care, a North East based care company, is currently operating a bespoke service in home care, to provide older adults with a range of services that are tailored to meet all of their needs.

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At Home with... Helen McArdle Care's focus on choice and flexibility mirrors the personalisation agenda, the Government initiative to transform social care, which aims to tailor services around the individual rather than fitting the individual into existing services. So even if you are funded by Social Services you can still access our services.

For a free, no obligation consultation or if you would like any guidance about how you may be able to obtain financial support towards the cost of care from At Home... with Helen McArdle Care, please contact Sharon Nicholson, Home Care Manager on 0191 461 8861.

www.athomewithhelenmcardlecare.co.uk

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Photos by Trevor Walker

Consultation event attracts over

A public consultation event held by developers considering one of two major housing schemes on the outskirts of Ponteland which could mean over 1,000 new homes attracted more than 400 people – but not all were impressed.

A number of villagers who attended the 'planning ideas day' at the Memorial Hall on June 14 staged a walkout, making it clear they would not support large-scale new housing on surrounding green belt land.

Lugano Group said they hosted the day on behalf of investors interested in proposals to meet the needs of current and future generations in Ponteland to identify the village's strengths and what needs to be improved to meet the wishes of people who live and work there, now and in the future. It is understood that Lugano Group represents landowners with landholdings of at least 2,500 acres.

A separate proposed development for the Clickemin Farm site either side of the A696* could see a further 500 homes built. Banks Property, behind this scheme, is planning its own consultation event this summer.

In an occasionally hostile exchange of views, key issues raised by residents at the Lugano event included local flooding, roads and transport, the village centre, wildlife and the environment, the impact of potential housing, the need for more affordable homes and congestion from schools traffic.

Ideas for the future included regenerating the village centre, flood-attenuation, and strengthening the infrastructure in and around Ponteland.

Lugano director Richard Robson said: "We're delighted that the day attracted and engaged hundreds of people who feel passionately about the place they live in.

"People gave up hours of their time to take part in workshops and discussions, many of them participating in more than one session and contributing valuable ideas that we will take forward. The workshops sparked some great ideas and fresh thinking about Ponteland's problems and strengths.

"We're now assessing all comments, ideas and concerns from the workshops and feedback forms, which we will post on our website and share with residents at our next event later in the summer."

Ponteland Mayor Peter Cowey added: "I would say the reaction of people there was not positive, and about 15 to 20 people walked out en masse because they were quite angry. We realise that Lugano owns land here and wants to make money from it, but locals say we have a village-type environment in Ponteland and we are happy with that.

"The feeling is that we don't want to become an urban sprawl, and are against building on the green belt."

* Inaccurate information supplied by a Banks Property spokesman last month suggested that the Clickemin Farm development area was either side of the B6545 Rotary Way. It is in fact either side of the A696 on the southern outskirts of the village.

Report on the Lugano 'planning ideas day'

By Brian Prickett,
Chairman, Ponteland Community Partnership

The all day consultation event included a series of discussions and workshops which Lugano Group claimed would help shape the future of Ponteland.

The event was well attended, particularly in the evening when it was standing room only!

People attending the morning session wanted to know what land around Ponteland Lugano held and are proposing to develop, and what would be the effect of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and conditional potential benefits for the community?

Lugano stated that they would use the profits from developments to fund community projects, and that they were responsible landowners as part of their overall property portfolio.

It was accepted that some minor improvements were needed in the area but massive housing estates were not, as more houses would have a significant impact on all the local services.

There was a comment from the floor that the Lugano proposals for community benefits associated with housing developments could be considered to be an inducement. Lugano explained that there were legal arrangements for the provision of infrastructure improvements related to a housing scheme.

Details of the plans that Lugano had in mind were requested. Their response was that they were seeking proposals from the people of Ponteland.



400 people - and a backlash

A number expressed their total disapproval of Lugano's proposals in very robust terms and then walked out of the meeting.

In the afternoon session Lugano were again asked for their proposals, and they responded that currently there were not any, but they would be bringing them forward in the future. They were also asked again for details of the extent of their landholding around Ponteland.

Concern was expressed about building on greenfield sites, the potential effects on flooding, sewerage and other services, and attendees said that what was needed was affordable housing that would be a balance to the Darras Hall estate.

Reference was made to an Environment Agency report (2006) which stated that there should be no developments that affected the flooding area associated with the River Pont, as the infrastructure cannot cope.

The impact of development on the current level of wildlife in the area was a major matter of concern and major housing developments were not wanted.

Lugano responded by stating that they wanted to produce proposals that had community support.

The evening session was opened by a Lugano representative outlining central government local community planning policy, and in particular they referred to the Northumberland County Council Core Strategy Plan – now out for consultation.

Also Ponteland Town Council has produced their draft Town Plan, available at a cost of £3 from the Council offices. When formally approved, this plan is to be fed into the County Council Core Strategy.

Lugano reiterated that they were major landowners around Ponteland (some 2500 acres of the original Dissington estate), also represented other landowners who were interested in future housing development, and that the current housing crisis created opportunities for development.

They wanted to look at all suitable areas in Northumberland for the provision of housing, in particular sites suitable for allocation for housing, some of which were around Ponteland. Their stated aim is to get the best value from their investments.

It was pointed out from the floor that the implications of the Lugano and Banks developments could increase the size of the current community by some 30% and overwhelm the current infrastructure and services.

Lugano responded by stating that there was no prescribed number of houses under consideration, but would come back with specific proposals in two to three months.

They were asked again to be more specific about their land holding, and to put a detailed map on their website showing the extent of the area under consideration.

A query was raised about the proposal that there were to be some 150 houses to be constructed on the present Northumbria Police Headquarters' site, and this must be set against the overall requirement.

Lugano explained that small piecemeal developments did not make a much of a contribution towards funding infrastructure problems, and therefore any development had to be of a sufficient size for the developer to fund infrastructure costs payable to service providers and any contributions towards community projects.

In other words, the level of community provision is determined by the size of any development.

The workshops produced a series of comments, mainly reiterating those raised in the discussions earlier in the sessions, with some suggestions for minor improvements.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy, introduced by central government as part of the Localism Bill, is a statutory requirement imposed on every developer as a contribution to the local authority for infrastructure improvements, and supersedes the Section 106 Agreements for voluntary agreed contributions.

This levy is normally assessed on a pounds per square foot basis of the properties built. It is believed that a figure of £30/sq ft has been quoted for another authority. The levy is not negotiable and it is not possible to specify how the levy is spent.

The Localism Bill requires the support of the local community for any development. Therefore the size of any development is governed by Ponteland and not by what a developer might wish to propose, nor any strategy put forward by the Northumberland County Council.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the Annual General Meeting of the Ponteland Community Partnership held on May 23 the following officers and members of the Executive Council were elected to serve for the next 12 months.

Officers:

Chairman - Brian Prickett
Vice Chairman - Syd Cowan
Hon Secretary - Shirley Hill
Hon Treasurer - Christine Greenwell

Sub-Group Chairmen:

Regeneration - Ray Sproul
Environment - George Clasper
Transport - vacancy
Youth - Matt Gray

Executive Council Members:

Mike Brown, Sheila Campbell, Caroline Athey, Frank Harrington, Robin Ramsay, Raymond Sproul, Margaret Stainsby.

Co-opted members:

Matthew Gray - Business
Rob Anderson - Police
Peter Cowey - Ponteland Town Council
Faith Representative - to be appointed.



Ponteland café re-opens Welcome to Jan's Kitchen!

By Muriel Sobo

At last, after a long wait and many rumours, the café on the Main Road in the heart of the village has re-opened.

The café has been extensively refurbished, decorated inside and out and an extension has been added at the back to provide more kitchen space and an easy access toilet with baby changing facilities. Everyone is welcome!

This is all the creation of Jan Metcalfe, who lives at Wooslington with her husband. Very experienced in the food industry, she worked for 15 years with the catering group Compass at a number of locations in and around Newcastle as a chef manager.

The site of her last place of work was closed so Jan took the opportunity of redundancy and has used her pay-off to fund the kitchen. Jan said: "For many years I worked hard doing long days but in that time I learnt my trade well. I have made some good friends over the years but found it was the right time for me to make the move and become my own boss."

Jan's Kitchen has a friendly feel, the coffee is recommended and the baking is mouth-watering! I watched the freshly baked cheese scones come from the oven in the kitchen to the display on the counter. Mmm!

Jan has contacted a number of cycling groups with the information that she is open and they are welcome and we in Ponteland look forward to seeing banks of cycles parked outside and loads of fit young men in lycra enjoying their bacon sandwich and coffee!



DIRECTOR OF SALES APPOINTED FOR AIRPORT HOTEL

DoubleTree by Hilton Newcastle International Airport Hotel has strengthened its management team with the appointment of a Director of Sales.

Catherine Graham is tasked with increasing business and raising its profile within the region, across the UK and overseas.

The 41-year old, of Sunderland, brings more than 17 years experience to the role, and will be responsible for marketing the 179-bedroom property, which opened in December, to both corporate and leisure travellers.



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

Secretary Greg Waugh at:
secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk
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Beware bogus officials

By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



In the period between April 13 to June 11 we have had 17 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- two burglary dwellings
- two burglary non dwellings
- two assaults
- two theft from unattended motor vehicles
- one theft of pedal cycle
- one theft from employer
- one theft from a shop
- one other theft
- one drugs offence
- four criminal damage.

There have been three arrests in relation to these offences and other enquiries are ongoing in relation to the others.

One of the burglary dwellings was a

distraction burglary to an elderly member of the community. Two males purporting to be from one of the facilities companies visited one of our more mature residents and managed to gain access to their property.

While one of the men kept the occupier busy the other male stole property from another part of the house. They then made their escape with the resident not realising the items had gone until later that day.

This is a good time to remind residents to thoroughly check the identification of any 'official' visitors they receive. If you are in any doubt about workmen please don't let them into your house.

With the good weather finally arriving this is also a good time to remind everyone about leaving gardening equipment and other items outside overnight. There are still opportunist thieves around the area and

leaving property out is an open invitation to them. To quote an old police saying "Lock it up or lose it".

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

The next Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving meeting will be held at Sure Start, Ponteland First School on Tuesday July 10 at 9.30am where you can raise community issues.

Local police surgeries will be held on the following dates:

- PC Lee Davison July 7 at 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay village shop
- PC Rob Anderson July 28 at 11.30am - 12.30pm at the Co-op, Broadway, Darras Hall.

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



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