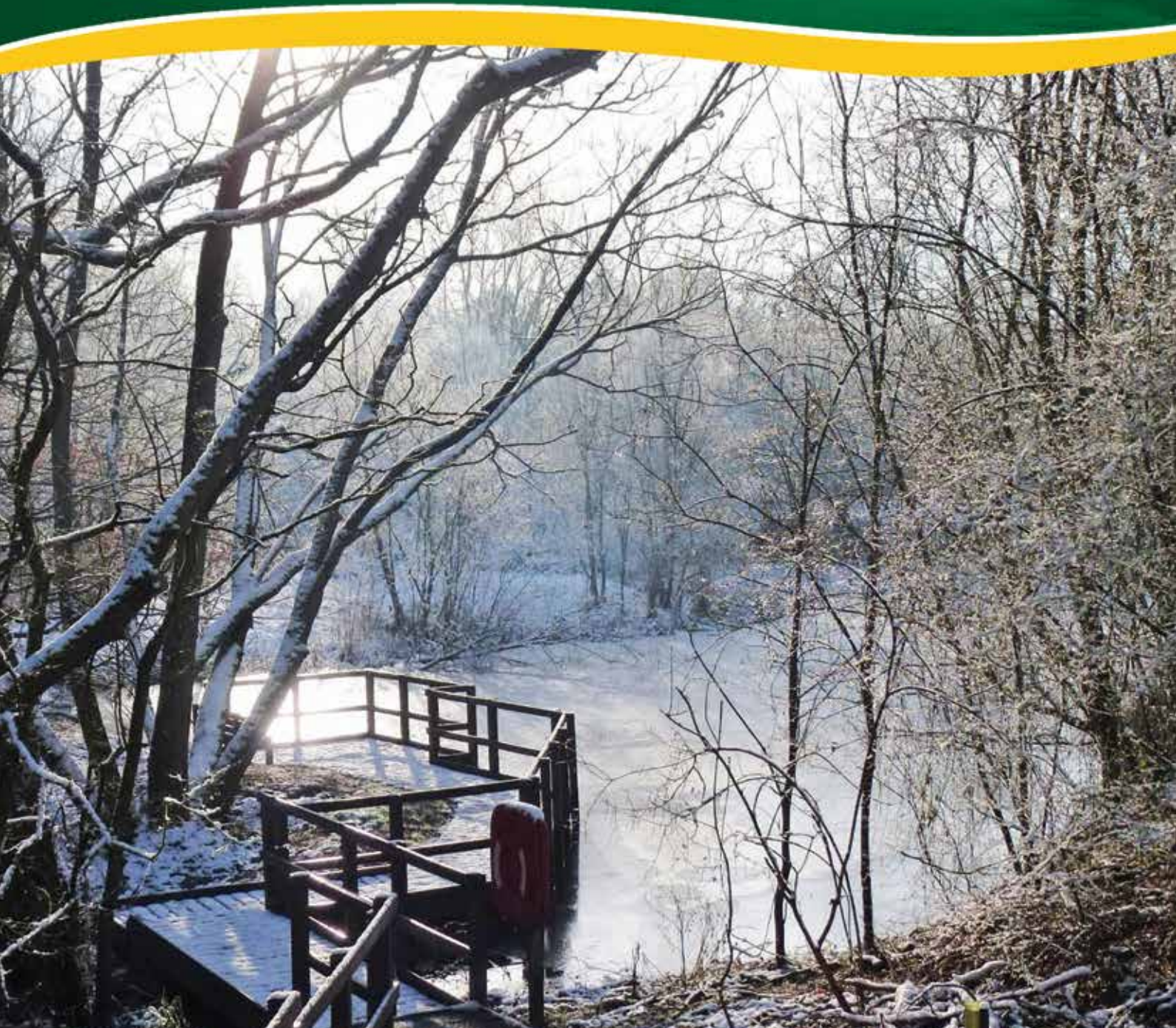


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## Plans in for 280 home green belt development



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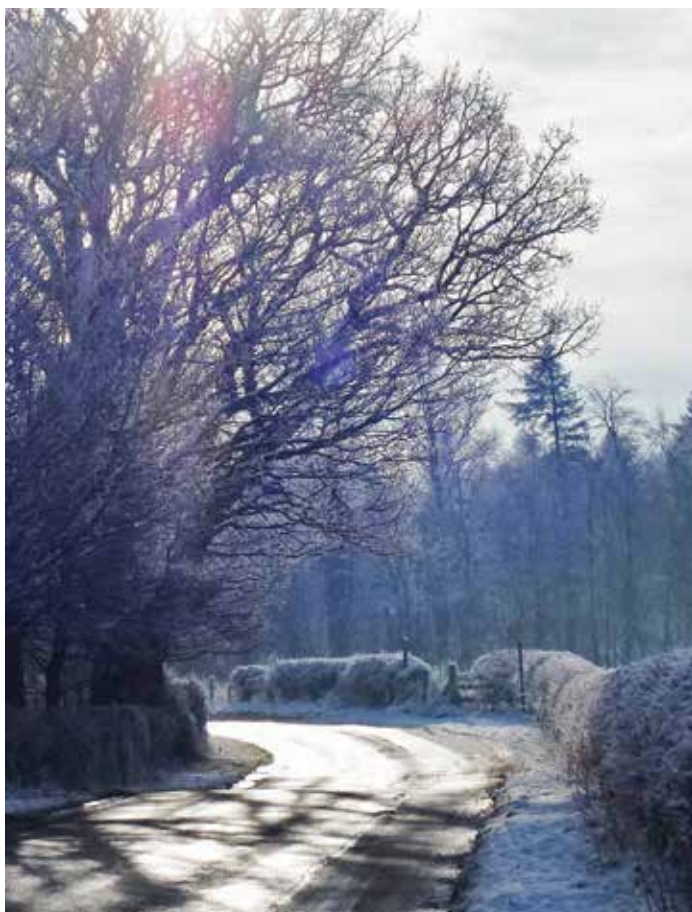
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# Readers rise to photo challenge

**Two stunning images sent in by readers sparked a challenge in last month's issue for more of your photos...and you did not disappoint.**

Correspondent Muriel Sobo's picture of winter sunrise used in the February magazine and June Richardson's photo of a pair of parakeets in her back garden in the January issue set the standard.

The response was impressive. Mike Sadler, of Middle Drive, has supplied this month's cover shot of Ponteland Park by the dipping platform, and another here of Fox Covert Lane.

Sylvia Rowlands wrote: "We live on Cheviot

View and this was a lovely sunset taken from our back garden a couple of weeks ago in January. This is the view that could be lost if the developers get their way; although they cannot destroy the sunset they can obliterate a clear view with houses."

Neil Dowden, of Eastern Way, sent in this photo of the River Pont, swollen by the melting of snow, taken near to the Memorial Hall on Sunday January 27.

Pauline Rossen, of The Avenue, Medburn, emailed a "beautiful" photo taken by work colleague Andrew Holland from their office window at The Hearing Care Centre in Pont Park.

Meanwhile June Richardson sent us

another of a mistlethrush enjoying melon on a snowy lawn. She wrote: "The parakeet photographs in last month's Pont News & Views gave a lot of pleasure to a lady in her 90s living in Mayfield Gardens. She telephoned me to say she had once had a parakeet in her little garden and missed its bright presence. So I printed off a copy and delivered it - she was mightily chuffed!"

If any other readers would like to submit photos taken in the Ponteland area for consideration for publication, please email them as high resolution jpegs to [pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk](mailto:pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk) and include your name, address and where and when the photo was taken.





*Volunteers queue to help distribute the green belt campaign information packs.*

# Planning application in for 280-home green belt scheme

**Controversial plans for a 280-home development on green belt land at Birney Hill have been submitted to Northumberland County Council.**

The £96m scheme also includes a community farm, commercial space, landscaping and open spaces, with 75 acres of land 'gifted' to the local community and managed by a community trust owned and run by residents.

Applicant Lugano Developments says the community trust will have access to funding of up to £10m to "enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the town". This would include a £3.5m pot to be spent on local projects, and a further £2m to help improve facilities at either the Merton Way or Broadway shopping centres.

The trust would also be responsible for managing a community farm and commercial workspace, and would own and control eight rented properties on the development and the land on which 54 low-cost houses for sale will be built. Trust members would play a key role in managing these 54 properties, ring-fenced for sale to local people at a huge discount on market values.

Lugano says they will also be committing a further £6m to further the delivery of improvements in relation to schools, education, transport, and other benefits.

The firm says the proposals include retirement homes, low cost home ownership and self-build plots.

Scott Munro, planning director at Lugano Developments said: "We are investing in Birney Hill to bring a superbly designed, 'green' housing scheme to Ponteland. The scheme will also create around 900 job opportunities over the next five to ten years.

"The creation of the community trust will set the tone for development for decades to come, leading by example as to how to involve the community in the governance of the places in which they want to live. Birney Hill will lead the way in the UK for cost-saving, energy efficient housing set in biodiverse landscape."

Ponteland Green Belt Group is campaigning against the plans and on Sunday February 17 more than 300 supporters gathered in the Memorial Car Park to pick up 5,000 information packs for distribution to every household in the parish.

Chair Alma Dunigan said: "The green belt is there for a specific purpose; not only to divide settlements but also to act as a natural sponge and provide natural habitat for the wildlife. If we are not careful we

could end up with a complete conurbation of buildings and houses from the Tyne Bridge and out and beyond Ponteland.

"Ponteland residents are immensely passionate about keeping the green belt and see this and any other large scale development on designated green belt around the settlement as totally unnecessary. It was only a few days ago that I identified 234 available dwellings 'for sale' within a three mile radius of Ponteland with a maximum price tag of £250,000. If we have this number available now I can't see the logic in having more."

## Have your say

Local people can find out more about the Birney Hill proposals at a series of briefings being held by Lugano until April which will be advertised on the [pontelandfutures.co.uk](http://pontelandfutures.co.uk) website.

Comments on the plans are being received by Northumberland County Council until March 9, and a decision is due at the May planning committee meeting. To view the application or make comments visit [tinyurl.com/birneyhillplanningapplication](http://tinyurl.com/birneyhillplanningapplication)

Ponteland Green Belt Group's website can be found at [www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk](http://www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk)



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## PLANNING COMMITTEE PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENTS

The Council discussed the procedure for dealing with impending applications for large scale developments. There was an application which was due to be received very soon in relation to a large scale development at Birney Hill. The Council discussed the timescale and agreed that this would be considered at special meeting of the Council on a suitable date to be arranged and to be held in Ponteland Memorial Hall or Merton Hall, whichever is available. It was stressed that the press and public could attend this meeting but that it was not a public meeting and as such public participation would be limited.

## GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS – GREAT NORTH AIR AMBULANCE

The Council approved a donation of £100 to this worthy cause.

## PROJECTS REPORT

### Memorial Hall

A meeting was held with the Memorial Hall representatives on January 15 when it was agreed to instruct the Chartered Buildings Surveyor to proceed with submission of a planning application to the County Council.

### River bank repairs

Requests for quotes had been sent out to four companies which were due for return on February 18. A report will be submitted to the next meeting to agree the award of the contract.

### Street information signs

The sign on Main Street has been lowered.

### Skate park

Information relating to the required noise survey is being sought.

### Repairs to brick walls at Waitrose bridge

An application has been submitted to the Environment Agency.

### Tree works at sub station and Darras Road

The Utilities company has agreed to carry out the tree works at the sub station and this should be carried out shortly. The work at the bus stop will be carried out very soon and this will result in a short period of traffic management. An application has to be submitted to NCC for removal of one of the trees.

### Blackbird public house

The Town Council is concerned at the delay in development works at the Blackbird Inn and the condition of the building and agreed to write a letter expressing concern to the owners of the building.

### Consultation re proposed move of the post office in Merton Way

Information has been received from the Post Office in relation to their proposal to move the post office in Ponteland from its current location in Merton Way to number 36. This will result in longer opening hours together with the introduction of a travel agency service. The Town Council welcomed the proposals and a letter of support will be sent to the Post Office.

### Consultation re street name for former Galliford Try premises

A letter has been received from the County Council asking for comments for the above development to be called 1 – 7 Pont Mill Rise. Various suggestions had been made by Councillors and it was agreed that the Council would prefer the development to be called 1 – 7 Mill House Close. An appropriate response will be sent to NCC.

### Request from Rotary Club for use of the park for the Duck Race and for provision of toilets

Letters have been received from Ponteland Rotary Club for permission to use the park for the Duck Race to be held on Sunday September 8. They also asked if the Council would consider providing the toilets for the event. Both requests were approved.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

A report was considered in relation to the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and the formation of the group who would work on this document. The report outlined the background to neighbourhood planning and the process that had to be followed. A group had been established with representation from the Town Council, County Councillors, the Ponteland Community Partnership and volunteers. This group would be part of the Town Council. Details of the membership of the group were reported and terms of reference were considered. The first formal step is to submit an application for registration to Northumberland County Council and this had to be made the Town Council as the qualifying body. The area covered would be the civil parish of Ponteland which also took in outlying areas. Details of financial provision being made available to the group were also reported. This was being sourced from

funding which had been previously earmarked for community forums and the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Council agreed to apply to the County Council for the designation of the Ponteland Town Council administrative area as a Neighbourhood Plan. The appointment of the group as outlined within the report was approved together with the terms of reference and Memorandum of Agreement. The funds were approved as outlined within the report and it was noted that the Town Council's representatives on the group would be the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor R G Ramsay MBE.

## CEMETERY COMMITTEE

A report was considered on the formation of a Cemetery Committee as a result of the Town Council taking over responsibility for Prestwick Cemetery from 1 April 2013. It was proposed that Northumberland County Council would run the service on behalf of the Town Council for 2013-14 during which time this would be closely monitored. The report included terms of reference for the Committee and minutes of two meetings which had been held on 17 January and 1 February were also considered. The Council agreed the terms of reference and noted the appointment of the Mayor as Chairman of the Committee and Councillor Ramsay as Vice Chairman. They also approved the appointment of the County Council as the contractor to provide the service on behalf of the Town Council under a Service Level Agreement arrangement for 2013-14.

## PONTELAND PATH USERS GROUP

The above group has been established and met on two occasions with some 15 people attending. Details of the membership of the group were reported and a copy of the suggested terms of reference was included within the report. The Town Council welcomed the establishment of the group and were delighted at the good response from volunteers. The terms of reference were approved and the appointment of Councillor Ramsay as Chairman of the Group was noted.

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

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# Trio hire quartet for first charity show

Three Ponteland men have launched a new charity to support beneficiaries they describe as 'the poor and the afflicted'.

The Pont Charity Group has been set up by Andy Anderson, Bruce Grant and Jim Robertson, and has 16 members. Andy is chair of the group, Bruce is the secretary and Jim acts as treasurer.

Bruce said: "We have set up, not in opposition to the established fundraisers, but specifically to support in a small way the poor, and the afflicted. The mode of operation will be to hold a concert and raffle twice per year, the proceeds going to selected charities.

"Whilst preference will be given to local charities, the trustees will also consider deserving causes from a wider field, and other methods."

The inaugural concert is being held on Tuesday June 4 and features male quartet Just4Men and soprano Marjorie Archer, with proceeds to the Great North Air Ambulance. The Grainger Singers will perform on Saturday October 26 in support of Children NE. Both concerts will be held at Ponteland Memorial Hall.

Just4Men sing a variety of music from both classical and contemporary composers - everything from Jacob Handl to Barry Manilow, oratorio to songs from the shows. Bass John Dixon, baritone Mike Scott, tenor David Conway and high tenor Ian Hebron have sung together for 15 years, but have only been together as a quartet for two years.

Marjorie Archer is one of the leading sopranos in the region, having sung many lead roles with local operatic societies and as guest soloist with many groups.

As a small charity The Pont Charity Group is not required to register with the Charity Commission, but does use their guidelines and small constitution. They will apply to HMRC for tax and recognition purposes.

Bruce added: "We are certain to do a worthwhile and fulfilling task, quite apart from the enjoyment and relaxation we will provide for our audiences."

Tickets for the June 4 show, costing £8, are available from Mackley & Steven, 25 Main Street, Ponteland, and Newcastle Building Society, 23 Broadway, Darras Hall. A bar is available and the show starts at 7pm.

## VOLUNTEER NEEDED FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

A volunteer is being sought to help the new Neighbourhood Plan Group which is working on a long term blueprint for the future development of Ponteland.

The group, made up of residents, Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Community Partnership, has been set up to progress a Neighbourhood Plan for Ponteland to promote and improve social, economic and environmental conditions in the area over the next 20 to 30 years.

The new member would act in the role of admin/secretary for meetings held in Ponteland during the early evenings on a Tuesday or Thursday twice a month. If you are interested please leave your name and contact details at the Town Council office on (01661) 825092.



## Ponteland netball team off to the national championships

**Ponteland High School's U14 netball team will be representing the region in the National Championships on Saturday March 16 in Basildon.**

The team scored a stunning success in the regional netball competition, held on January 26 at Sport Central at Northumbria University, performing brilliantly to post a second place finish and guarantee their place in the finals.

All games were hard fought but the match against Durham High was particularly nail-biting. Ponteland were three goals down and looking very tired. However, they stuck in to fight back to level pegging. As the final buzzer went a penalty shot was awarded to Ponteland - allowing Faye Walker to score the winning goal!

PE teacher Julie Chisholm said: "The girls were outstanding. They really played as a team and displayed a never say die attitude. I am very proud of them."

The successful team are: Karly White; Faye Walker; Sophie Williamson; Rachel Cripwell; Catherine Young; Sarah Hamilton; Sophie Wainwright; Millie Cassidy and Grace Bittle.

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# Your letters

Alarm at parakeets and men with guns, anger at a derelict historic landmark and criticism of Green Belt campaigners, and thanks to Good Samaritans...in another bumper letters' page this month.

## Who benefits from housing scheme other than Lugano?

**Lugano is using a loophole in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that supposedly allows development on the Green Belt if there are "special" circumstances.**

There is nothing in the NPPF that links "special circumstances" and the building of houses. When these Green Belt areas are finally confirmed in the Northumberland County Council Core Strategy, it will need "exceptional" circumstances to develop on them.

The Ponteland community overwhelmingly at the last NCC Core Strategy consultation opposed housing development in the Green Belt, which Lugano ignores, and tries to use the loophole to turn agricultural land bought at agricultural prices, into residential at a huge profit. This is not a benefit to the community, but a benefit to Lugano. I ask myself "Will Localism prevail?"

Do communities have control, or do wealthy financiers and their fat wallets pull the strings?

Developers' proposals will result in urban sprawl all the way to Newcastle. Thanks to Lugano, Ponteland's housing boundary will eventually merge with West Newcastle where thousands of new homes are planned. This is a benefit only to local Lugano investors who will never live there.

At a time when there needs to be more agricultural farming land, Lugano's plan removes nationally needed agricultural land from production and destroys wildlife habitats, all for profit.

There is no need for extra housing, with 350 houses available of this type in the area already, and certainly cheaper. The quoted housing shortage like all statistics can be shown to be what you want them to show. Lugano say there is a deficit. The only deficit is in the jobs, and mortgages that do not allow people to buy houses.

Where is the benefit for residents living in these new houses directly near Newcastle Airport flight path? Even the Airport is

already contemplating the future persistent noise complaints. The Lugano proposal has residents living close to the Airport crash zone, and cascading jet emissions. There must be benefits but I cannot think of any.

Where is the benefit for the residents wanting to use an already overwhelmed medical centre, schools, and to further exacerbate traffic congestion in Ponteland. There is no mention of a community infrastructure levy to pay for all the hidden costs of setting up a new large community. Presumably that will be paid for by residents, in their rates, rather than out of the profits of Lugano.

There have been five flooding events last year from Birney Hill. The proposed extra houses will exacerbate the problem for all residents downstream. Where is the community benefit if more homes are flooded by exacerbated runoff from Lugano's proposals? Ask the washed away community at Newburn what they think about poorly thought out drainage schemes.

Lugano keep saying "for the community" when really what they are meaning is "for profit". Lugano's only real benefit to the community has been to unite nearly all Ponteland residents against them.

**John Blundell**  
Riverside  
Ponteland

## Opponents of Green Belt development should be applauded not derided

I thought the comments from Graeme Bell OBE in the January edition a confused and poorly made point.

Quoting the very worthy causes of the Trevelyan family is fine, but remember they left their property to the National Trust to be retained intact for generations to come. They certainly did not hand it over suggesting a large housing estate be built in the courtyard...

Leaving aside this rather silly point, Trevelyan was a huge promoter of 'a love and

appreciation of the countryside' according to the full press statement by Mr Bell, which then jumps quite bizarrely to criticising the Ponteland residents for trying to protect just that!

In the same statement he tries to make a point that some people in the UK don't have a roof over their heads as if this is what the residents are trying to prevent. Everyone in a democracy has the right to try and look after their quality of life, something enjoyed in Ponteland and its environs.

That the residents feel huge scale building is inappropriate, unnecessary and likely to have a hugely detrimental effect on their quality of life through traffic, flood risk, infrastructure concerns or whatever is perfectly reasonable.

That they are motivated to use the system to protest and have their say should be applauded not derided by the likes of Mr Bell.

**David Walton**  
Richmond Hill  
Stamfordham

## Planning objections need to go to County, not Town Council

**The letter from Ian C Brown in the January issue of Pont News & Views regarding the fight to save Ponteland's Green Belt and the comment at the end of his letter concerning the Town Council's role in planning highlighted to me that some people are still unclear about the role of the Town Council in these matters.**

I had thought that my explanation was clear, (see December issue), but maybe I can simplify things further – Northumberland County Council's (NCC) planning department consult the Town Council about all planning applications within the parish boundary, and we, based upon local knowledge, local opinion and planning rules, recommend to NCC either acceptance or rejection of the plans.

The final decision to allow a planning application to proceed or to be rejected rests with the NCC West Area Planning Committee,

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.

**April issue deadlines:** The April issue will be delivered on Thursday March 28. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday March 11. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the April issue.



which is made up of 10 County Councillors representing the whole of the west area of the county. The committee takes advice from NCC's planning officers who must comply with current planning legislation. The Town Council and local County Councillors can, and often do, present their case against an application which they consider inappropriate, when it comes before the County planning committee. Unfortunately however, their views do not always carry sufficient weight to influence the final decision.

I hope that residents are now clear that Northumberland County Council is the final planning authority, and that letters of objection or comments should be addressed to NCC.

**Coun David Butler**

*Chairman of the planning committee  
Ponteland Town Council*

### Appalled at 'abandonment' of Blackbird Inn

As a resident of Ponteland I am appalled that the Blackbird Pub has remained closed for over two years. It is a beautiful building at the centre of the village and deserves better than to be left abandoned.

Whilst the Blackbird remains closed the other two pubs in the village are thriving. I'm sure English Heritage may share my concerns at the risk of deterioration to this Grade I Listed Building too.

**Amanda Williamson**

*Errington Road,  
Darras Hall*

### Don't encourage parakeets in Ponteland

It was with great dismay that I saw the very good photographs of the two green parakeets in the January issue of Pont News & Views (Pretty polities in Ponteland!)

I was aware that there had been a single parakeet in and around the centre of the village for several years, but the presence of two fills me with alarm. I have experienced the hordes of parakeets in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens in London when visiting our daughter, especially the screeching

racket that they produce as they fly about the tree canopy, and I would not wish that on Ponteland residents.

I suspect that this letter may provoke some reaction. I am not advocating a cull of either or both of these birds, I am simply trying to alert people to the possible disturbance that these birds may cause to the local environment, especially if they reproduce and begin to push out the resident population of those bird species which feed and nest in similar areas in our gardens and Park.

They may look attractive when they visit your gardens, but I would urge people not to encourage them by putting out special food or creating special parrot friendly habitats. We have plenty of beautiful and fascinating native species to enjoy – why encourage foreign immigrants?

**David Butler**

*Ladywell Way  
Ponteland*

### Memorial refurbishment a better way to spend money

It would appear that our local Council has more money than either sense or taste.

What do they think they are doing? First of all they raised our lovely statue on Coates Green up on a plinth. This immediately spoiled the whole effect of simplicity which had been created. Not content with that, I see that they have now added to their woeful bad taste with some further masonry which does not even match that already there.

I might add that the raising of the flowerbed was not appreciated by most of us who had hopes that it would be returned to normal after the Jubilee celebrations.

The Council obviously has money they need to use up. There are surely very many worthwhile ways of spending it. The refurbishing of the Memorial springs to mind for starters.

**Anne Matthew**

*Dunsgreen  
Ponteland*

### Alarmed at gun wielding young men

I am a regular dog walker around the village and am alarmed by the number of young men I see in camouflage clothing carrying, what would seem to be rifles, in rifle cases.

Some weeks ago I was so alarmed to see two men on the old railway line behind the Middle School, I came home and reported the sighting on the 101 non emergency number. Today I saw two men on the other side of the track near Waitrose but as they were very close to me and spoke, I did not report them as I was fearful they would recognise me.

Surely it is illegal to carry, what are probably air rifles, around a village like ours, worrying/frightening residents?

**E Denham**

*Dunsgreen  
Ponteland*

### Thanks for your help after my fall

I would like to convey my thanks to several people who came to help me after I fell outside Lloyds Bank on Thursday January 10, especially to Alison Phillips and her son Daniel.

Daniel brought his mother, an orthopaedic nurse who was in the vicinity, and Alison quickly diagnosed a fractured humerus. They brought me home by car and ensured that I was able to get to A & E at the RVI.

Much gratitude to all who helped.

**June Richardson**

*Edgehill  
Ponteland*

### Thank you for posting my lost letter

I would like to thank the kind person who, on finding a letter I had somehow lost along Main Street, posted it for me.

It contained an important cheque so I am more than grateful.

**Joan Turner**

*Low Haugh  
Ponteland*



## Ponteland Golf Club

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Both playing & social memberships are currently being offered at Ponteland Golf Club. Membership categories start from the age of 10 and there is a range of payment options currently available for both ladies and gentlemen. There is currently no waiting list for ANY category. 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**  
**Tel: 01661 822689**





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# What's on...

## Ponteland History Society Help Desk

Are you doing a school project, researching family history, needing historical information on a date, building or person in the Ponteland area, or looking for an old local photograph? Then perhaps we can help. Our free help desk is open at Ponteland Library from 2.15pm to 5pm on Friday March 1, 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 Saturday March 2.

## Ponteland High School's Little Shop of Horrors

Ponteland High School's performance of Little Shop of Horrors runs at the Memorial Hall from Tuesday March 5 to Friday March 8. Each show starts at 7pm, with an additional matinee at 1pm on Thursday March 7. Tickets can be purchased from the main school office costing £5. Please come along and support the students as they put on what is sure to be a great show.

## Fairtrade Fortnight in Ponteland

The final 'Big Brew' of Ponteland's Fairtrade Fortnight is on Saturday March 9 in St Matthew's Church Hall from 10am to 12noon. All welcome for Fairtrade tea, coffee

and cakes and a Fairtrade raffle and stall.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday March 11 is Revd Glyn Evans and his subject: It's a Funny Old World. March 13 is our annual dinner and ladies night. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm. Membership is open to gentlemen aged over 55. The annual subscription is £10. For further details contact Donald Lloyd at [donaldflloyd@sky.com](mailto:donaldflloyd@sky.com) or on (01661) 872661.

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

On Monday March 11 we are delighted to welcome our guest speaker Diane Clements who has been growing alpine plants for over 16 years in her shady Midlands garden. She is a keen member of the Alpine Garden Society, regularly exhibits her plants and is also a judge and show reporter. The talk will include a detailed look at both genera with lots of practical information about how to grow them from seed, cultural information, re-potting and round the year care. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Our Northumberland Spring Show of bulbs, woodland plants and alpine flowers is on Saturday April 13 at the Wentworth Leisure Centre, Hexham. Open to the public from 12noon - 4pm. Plant sales from 10.30am. Entry £2.50 (AGS/SRGC members free).

## 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.

## Merton Hall events and activities

A short trip is planned for Thursday March 14, leaving at 10am for Cramlington. Please contact Merton Hall on (01661) 872197 for further details. Don't forget to pop in Monday to Saturday morning for a cuppa for only 30p (the second cup free). Chair based exercise every Monday at 11am until 11.45am; no need to book, just come and join in for £1.50.

## Ponteland Floral Art Club

Tuesday March 19 at 7.30pm, Ponteland Memorial Hall. Demonstration by Craig Bullock of Lancs (N), entitled: 'Inspired by Nature' (AGM starts at 7pm).

## Friends of Ponteland Park Spring Walk

Our popular Spring Walk will take place on Saturday March 23, meeting at 10am at the Main Street

entrance to the Park. Come and enjoy our Park's progress and enjoy a hot drink afterwards! All welcome.

## Embroiderers' Guild - Ponteland branch

We now meet at the Memorial Hall from 2pm - 4pm on the fourth Monday of the month (except December. On Bank Holidays the meeting is on the preceding Monday). On March 25 Mini Workshop - 'Make a Sewing Bag' with Jane Penny (using all your favourite stitches). New members and visitors are most welcome (you don't have to be an expert to join!) Visitors' fee £3 (includes tea/coffee and biscuits). Further information from Carol Bird (01661) 881395.

## Ponteland Civic Society

Meeting Monday March 25 at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall. This is the occasion of our Annual General Meeting which will be followed by Pauline Wallis who will speak on 'The Past, Present and Future of the Theatre Royal'. Visitors are most welcome, for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

## Ponteland Photographic Society

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

## Ponteland Community Partnership

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

## GUIDE LEADERS REWARDED FOR 70 YEARS OF SERVICE

**Two Ponteland Girl Guide leaders have received long service awards after a combined 70 years of guiding.**

Lesley Hughes, a Brown Owl in Ponteland, received her 30 year service award and Lucinda Porter, a Guide Leader in Darras Hall, received her 40 year service award and the prestigious Chief Commissioners Award given annually for outstanding service to Girlguiding.

The ceremony was held at the Waggon Inn at Higham Dykes, where 20 guiders and ex-guiders from Castle Ward Division reminisced about a combined 360 years of service.

Guiding volunteers are being sought and should contact Lesley at [lesleyhghs@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lesleyhghs@yahoo.co.uk) or on (01661) 824843.

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

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

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

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



# Churches together in Ponteland

The Ponteland churches wish  
you a peaceful and joyous Easter

## United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall

Palm Sunday Service March 24	10am
Good Friday Service March 29	10am
Easter Sunday Communion March 31	10am

## St. Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

Palm Sunday March 24 Holy Communion	8am
Procession starts at Richard Coates School and proceeds down Thornhill Road to Church. (If you cannot walk come to Church at 10am).	10am
Palm Sunday March 24 United Service	6.30pm
Mon March 25 to Sat March 30 Compline and Address	7pm
Compline is the late night service of the monasteries. Half an hour of peace and quiet.	
Maundy Thursday March 28	7pm
Choral Communion then a Vigil until Compline	
Good Friday March 29 Morning Service	10.30am
Easter Sunday March 31 Holy Communion	8am
Festal Communion	10am
Evening Service	6.30pm

## Methodist Church, Ponteland

Palm Sunday Service March 24	10am
All age worship and Palm sharing	
Holy week service for Women's Fellowship March 26	2.30pm
Holy Week Film night March 26	7pm
Maundy Thursday March 28 Upper Room Communion	7.30pm
Good Friday March 29 Morning Service	10am
Circuit Choir sings at Westerhope March 29	6pm
Easter Sunday March 31	
Sunrise Service at Bolam Lake then breakfast at church	6am
Holy Communion	10am
Evening Worship	6.30pm

## Methodist Church, Milbourne

Palm Sunday Service March 24	6.30pm
Good Friday March 29 Evening Service	7pm
Easter Sunday March 31 Holy Communion	6.30pm

## St Matthew's R.C., Ponteland

Holy Thursday Mass March 28	8pm
Good Friday Passion March 29	3pm
Holy Saturday Easter Vigil March 30	6pm
Easter Service, Mass March 31	10.30am

## Holy Saviour, Milbourne

Palm Sunday March 24 Holy Communion	11.15am
Good Friday March 29 Service of Reflection	2pm
Easter Sunday March 31 Holy Communion	11.15am

## Coates Green, Ponteland

Good Friday	11.15am
Raising of the Cross	
Refreshments in the Methodist Hall after the service.	

You are warmly invited to these services.



## Police put the brakes on Pont speeders

**Police and local councillors have joined forces to fund a new speed detection device to catch speeding motorists in Ponteland.**

Local county councillors helped fund the device, which is now in the hands of the East Tynedale Neighbourhood Policing Team.

The team will be out on the roads measuring the speed of local traffic and taking action on those who drive over the speed limit – the subject of numerous complaints to Pont News in recent months.

Acting Inspector Mick Stephenson said: "This is an excellent opportunity for officers to not only tackle issues of speeding in the area but also reassure the community that we are listening to their concerns and will take action.

"This serves as a warning to those who do drive over the speed limit - we are in the area and we are watching. If caught, you will face police action which could result in a fixed penalty notice and points on your licence. Don't take the risk. Stick to the speed limit and keep East Tynedale a safe place for motorists and pedestrians."

Anyone with any issues or concerns in the area can contact the East Tynedale Neighbourhood Policing Team on 101 ext 69191.

For more information about policing in your community follow Twitter @NPnmbland or like us at Facebook.com/NPNorthumberland. Google search - Police Northumberland.

PC Lee Davison, Neighbourhood Beat Manager for Ponteland, is pictured showing Ponteland county councillor Veronica Jones the new speed detection device. Photo by Trevor Walker.





# Spring brings new beginnings

Easter comes early this year with Easter Monday falling on 1st April. It is also April Fool's day and a hugely significant date from a legal point of view.

From 1st April 2013, in an attempt by the government to dramatically cut public spending, public funding, better known as legal aid, will no longer be available to most people seeking legal advice for separation or divorce, for matters relating to children or for financial provision on separation. There are predictions that as a result, massively increased numbers of people will be forced to represent themselves in family legal proceedings when their relationship breaks down.

At such a stressful and worrying time, when finances may well be stretched to the limit, access to expert advice is a priority. Knowing your options and rights is vital to choosing the appropriate route to take, and understanding how best to take that route to reach the conclusion you are seeking.

At Major Family Law, we believe that everyone should have access to the best quality legal advice when they most need it, so we work closely with each individual to offer a service tailored to that person's specific circumstances and needs.

We offer a free no obligation initial interview during which we can establish the nature of your concern and outline your options to you. We recognise that legal costs can be a huge concern, so we will talk you through all our payment plans at the first interview and help you to find the right one for you. At a time when a dramatically increased number of people will find themselves unable to afford full legal representation, we offer a range of options to allow you to access our legal services, including:

- A 'pay as you go' service which literally allows you to pay for only what you need, when you need it, for example you may need help with form filling or advice before a hearing.
- A fixed fee divorce. (terms and conditions apply)

- A regular payment plan by standing order where you require a greater level of ongoing assistance.
- One off assistance, for example drafting a pre-nuptial or separation agreement.
- Advice as to the appropriateness of a referral to mediation or use of collaborative law.

The landscape of family law is about to change dramatically. Don't get caught out: we will continue to offer the highest standard of legal advice in an affordable way to allow you to face your future with confidence.

If you would like to book a free initial appointment to discuss your concerns in confidence, you can visit us at: 12 West Road, Ponteland, NE20 9SU or telephone 01661 82 45 82. Email: [enquiries@majorfamilylaw.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@majorfamilylaw.co.uk) Web: [www.majorfamilylaw.co.uk](http://www.majorfamilylaw.co.uk)

Anna Hunter is an Associate solicitor at Major Family Law and a trained collaborative lawyer.

Anna Hunter, Major Family Law  
01661 82 45 82

“When there is no turning back, then we should concern ourselves only with the best way of going forward.”

Paulo Coelho

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# Kirkley Hall hosts Ministerial visit

**Kirkley Hall hosted a Ministerial visit highlighting the importance of marketing apprenticeships as a valid route into employment.**

Matthew Hancock MP attended the North East Apprenticeship Summit, held at the Northumberland College campus on February 1, in his capacity as Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning.

In a keynote speech delivered in front of school and business leaders, Mr Hancock emphasised the importance of marketing apprenticeships as an alternative to going to university.

He said: "We need to make the information available and encourage all schools to act in an effort to get information of all the options available, including apprenticeships."

The event was organised by Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman in partnership with the college. A number of former and current apprentices were invited to collect certificates for outstanding achievement and to share success stories.



Northumberland College Principal Stuart Cutforth, who revealed that he had left school aged 16 to be a coal mining apprentice, said: "We offer over 40 apprenticeships within industries as diverse as equine, horticulture, engineering and hairdressing."

The college offers advice to businesses

interested in taking on apprentices and can help them access funding of up to £1,500. For more information visit [www.northumberland.ac.uk](http://www.northumberland.ac.uk)

*Further Education Minister Matt Hancock is pictured (front) with MP Guy Opperman (back centre) and staff and students at Kirkley Hall. Photo by Trevor Walker.*

## High profile equestrian events come to Kirkley this summer

**Northumberland College's Kirkley Hall campus is set to launch a regular schedule of equestrian competitions with two high profile events planned for this summer.**

The campus, near Ponteland, which runs a series of equine courses, will be hosting British Eventing and Affiliated British Dressage this June.

It was selected to host the competitions on the strength of its equine facilities. Kirkley Hall has a 25 horse stable yard, eight DIY stables for students, a demonstration area, two floodlit 60x30m outdoor all weather arenas, a cross country course and a 50x25m indoor riding arena.

The events are expected to attract hundreds of competitors and spectators from all over the North East and will strengthen the region's presence in the eventing and dressage calendar.

The inaugural British Eventing One Day Event takes place on Sunday June 9 and annually thereafter. It will see riders and their horses compete in the three disciplines of dressage, show jumping and cross country. There will also be stalls and hospitality available.

The Affiliated Dressage event, which will take place on Saturday June 29 and will run monthly thereafter, will see competitors compete on the new indoor riding surface which is the same surface used at the London 2012 Olympics.



## KIRKLEY HALL

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**EASTER CARVERY  
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*Sun 31 March, 12noon-2pm, £15.95pp*

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**Lambing Weekend**  
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**Bunny and Chicks weekend**  
Sat 30 & Sun 31 March, 10am-4pm

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# How you can help us reduce crime

By PC Rob Anderson  
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



Total Policing

**In the period between January 14 and February 13 we have had 11 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.**

These break down to the following offences:

- one theft from a motor vehicle
- one damage to a motor vehicle
- two theft other
- two possession of cannabis
- two assaults occasioning actual bodily harm
- three burglary dwellings

The two assaults and two possess cannabis offences have been detected. Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the other offences.

Following the burglary dwellings and theft from a motor vehicle we think it is important to highlight some actions which would help us to help you:

- If you see anything suspicious, either people of vehicles, please contact the police. The smallest thing could help us to either prevent an offence or assist us to detect a crime.
- Take registration numbers of suspicious

vehicles. Let us know where and when you've seen the vehicle and what the occupants look like.

- Please lock your vehicles when you leave them. An offender has been targeting vehicles which have been left unlocked and taking items.
- Door locks. Your home security is very important and the first step in preventing a break in is by ensuring you have good door locks. If you have UPVC doors they have multi-lock systems but it's worth investing in a mortice lock if your wooden door only has a Yale type lock. Of course, a lock is only any good if it's locked, which is another thing people sometimes forget to do.

Be vigilant and together we can reduce crime.

A member of the 24/7 shift which work from Ponteland Police Office has asked if thanks can be given to the people who offered help to him when he had a puncture on The Broadway, Darras Hall. Well done for your community spirit.

In response to a letter in February's Pont News & Views we will be adding Middle Drive,

Darras Hall, to our usual Speed Watch areas.

Starting from March 1, Ponteland Community High School will be allowing the use of their Sports Hall for the local youth to play five-a-side football between 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

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:

- CSO Jill Ruddick Sat March 2 - 9.30am to 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison Sat March 9 - 11.30am to 12.30pm at Belsay Village shop
- PC Rob Anderson Sat March 23 - 11.30am to 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

We also have engagement days at these venues and dates:

- Wed March 20 - 10am to 12noon Merton Way/1pm to 3pm Broadway
- Thu March 28 - 1pm to 3pm Stamfordham/Belsay.

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



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## PODIATRY

hb podiatrist Gillian Wren is offering a free podiatry treatment to anyone who purchases a pair of frames from hb opticians during March and April. Gillian, who is a member of the Society of Chiropodists and is registered with the Health Professionals Council, offers a range of treatments at our Darras Hall clinic.



**GET A FREE  
PODIATRY TREATMENT**

Buy a pair of frames from our £79+ range during March and April and qualify for a free podiatry treatment at our Darras Hall clinic with this voucher. To find out more visit the website.

Podiatry promotion not to be used in conjunction with any other vouchers or offers and open to over-18s only who purchase frames from our £79+ range during March and April 2013.

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# Busy year ahead for cricket club's top tier sides

By Chris Morgan

**Ponteland Cricket Club will start the 2013 campaign next month with both the club's first and second teams in the top tier of the Wellstream Northumberland and Tyneside Senior League for the first time since 2006.**

Despite finishing in third place in Division A2 last season, the 1st XI were promoted to Division A1 after a divisional reshuffle at the League AGM and will now pit their wits against some of the biggest clubs in North-East cricket. Meanwhile, the 2nd XI enjoyed a successful return to Division B1 last year.

The club will again be operating two midweek sides and a Sunday friendly side as well as four junior teams in 2013.

Ponteland CC has been busy during the winter recruiting new players to strengthen the squad and they got to meet their new team mates at the first net session in February. These are running every Tuesday night from 8pm to 9pm at South Northumberland Cricket Club, Gosforth. The junior sessions take place every Friday night at Walbottle Campus from 6pm – 7.30pm. Players of any ability in the area are welcome to either session.

Back in October, club chairman Andrew Morgan was rewarded for his services to the game as he received a Northumberland Cricket Board OSCA (Outstanding Services to Cricket Award) from former England captain Andrew Strauss at a reception at Lord's (pictured).

Off the field, the club recently held a Chinese Evening at the New Rendezvous in which over £500 was raised. The club are very excited to have acquired the services of former Newcastle United full back John Beresford and Geordie comic Brendan Healy as speakers at the next social event – the Sportsman's Dinner on Friday March 22 at Ponteland Memorial Hall.



Tables of 10 at £200 per table (includes pie and pea supper) are still available to be purchased. Anyone interested in putting together a table can contact Stuart Taylor on 07837 091018.

For more information on the club in general, please call Chris Morgan on 07814 736865.



## Manor residents entertained by musical trio

By June Richardson

**Residents at Ponteland Manor were entertained by a trio of final year music students from Newcastle University.**

Flautist Tom Lovatt played two of Telemann's Twelve Fantasias for Flute, No. 9 and No. 12;

Hannah Tattersfield played the Presto and Sarabande movements of Bach's unaccompanied Sonatas and Partitas for violin and the melody from Dvorak's Symphony no. 9; and Corinna Philpott played the Adagio movement of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and Lirio Caprice by Francisco Gomez.

The trio will be participating in Festival North East and the ICMuS Summer Music Festival in June – find out more at the websites [www.festivalne.com](http://www.festivalne.com) and [www.icmusmusicfestival.co.uk](http://www.icmusmusicfestival.co.uk)

# YOU'RE INVITED

**Kevin Higgins and Richard Winter  
would like to cordially invite you to an  
open evening at their new dental practice.**

**Date:** Wednesday March 6th 2013

**Time:** 6pm to 9pm

**Venue:** Higgins & Winter Dental Practice,  
17 Bell Villas, Ponteland, NE20 9BD

Enjoy a glass of bubbly as we show you round our new state-of-the-art facilities  
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to chat to Kevin or Richard on the evening please call us to allow us to  
set some time aside for you.

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



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