

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



250 for; 2,000 against - Lugano
letters flood in to County Council

No Town Council elections as
12 Tories returned unopposed

Andy gets Mayor's Award after
long innings

Row could scupper £20m town centre regeneration

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Talented trio pass musical theatre exams with top marks

A talented trio from Ponteland who hope to pursue careers in the performing arts have passed musical theatre exams with top marks.

Laura Longworth, 17, Beth Morgan, 15, and Kristina Hollier, 17, have just qualified with merits in the Trinity Guildhall Musical Theatre Examinations. The exams, which have global recognition, are split into three parts: singing; dancing and drama.

The girls were among 18 students at the Famous 4.15 performing arts school in Jesmond, Newcastle, presented with certificates by actress Rachel Teate, who is currently starring in CBBC's Wolfblood as Kara.

Katherine Monaco, of Famous 4.15, said: "The girls have been with us at Famous 4.15 for many years now and each term we see them grow in confidence and as young performers. They are dedicated, focused, talented and are a pleasure to have around. We are very proud of their achievements and wish them every success."

*Laura, Beth and Kristina are pictured with Rachel Teate.
Photo by Trevor Walker*



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Failure of negotiations could cost Ponteland £20m revamp

A £20m town centre redevelopment for Ponteland is set to be lost because of a “totally unacceptable failure” in negotiations between the developer and Northumberland County Council.

This is the angry claim being made by Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Community Partnership in a strongly worded open letter to county council leader Jeff Reid and chief executive Steve Stewart, and developer MKP.

The county council has been accused of withdrawing the library site on Thornhill Road from the overall scheme in direct contravention of the original development brief which received the support of the local community.

MKP says this withdrawal effectively makes the scheme unviable as it removes the opportunity of compulsory purchase order powers needed to secure land and buildings.

The impasse came to a head after NCC's deputy chief executive Kate Rowe wrote to MKP issuing an ultimatum and deadline for receipt of a new business plan by May 1. Without this, the Council would “proceed to consider other options for the regeneration of Merton Way”.

The county council said it had to be “assured that there is a sound scheme and business case in place” before proceeding.

The development plans included demolishing the existing shops in Merton Way and replacing them with at least 20 modern retail units, including cafes and restaurants, with flats above them. A new community hub would include a relocated library and community centre, new housing, improved car parking, green open spaces and a water feature.

The plans received enthusiastic support at a public exhibition in February 2009 which more than 700 villagers attended and the following year the county council signed an exclusivity agreement with MKP aimed at progressing and delivering the scheme.

But little progress appears to have been made in the three years since, leading to the current stalemate with accusations being levelled from each side.

In the joint letter to NCC, Ponteland Mayor Peter Cowey and Brian Prickett, chair of PCP, wrote: “For negotiations in respect of such a major project, developed initially by the community, to have reached such a



Residents attending the public exhibition in February 2009

depth displays a disastrous state of affairs.

“The town centre regeneration scheme is to be lost as a result of the inability to reach agreement by negotiation. The failure by the county to confirm the future of the library in relation to the scheme has been a major factor in reaching this impasse.

“This is totally unacceptable and we would request the withdrawal of the ultimatum, confirmation that the library remains within the scheme and a sense of real purpose is devoted by both parties towards moving the project forward to the next stage.”

A spokeswoman for the county council said: “The key issue for the council is to receive a viable business plan from the developer and the council has been clear with all stakeholders – the prospective developer, local councillors and community partnership – that it needs to see this before any further discussions take place. This has been reiterated a number of times. When this is received the council will be able to consider a proposed scheme.”

In a statement, Sunil Mehra of MKP added: “Senior officers at Northumberland County Council have stubbornly sidestepped requests for information regarding Ponteland Library for almost two years now. Since the library is an essential component for the deliverability of the regeneration of Ponteland's town centre as its community hub, it is not possible to

have a successful business plan without its inclusion.

“Having worked closely with Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Community Partnership for a number of years now, I am both frustrated and dismayed at the council's dismissal of the Ponteland community.

“As a Ponteland resident of over 30 years, I remain committed to the regeneration of Merton Way and hope the council will cooperate so that the project can get back on track.”

THIS MONTH'S COVER SHOT

Thanks to reader John Shahabeddin, of Rowan Drive, Ponteland, for this month's stunning cover shot of the interior of St Mary's Church.

John was, like a number of readers, responding to the challenge we set to send in your best photos. We will continue to consider images for publication that you send in to pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk





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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS

The meeting of the Town Council was preceded by the Annual Town Meeting of Electors. The Mayor presented his Annual Report for 2012 which is available on the Council's website. The Mayor also presented the meritorious service award to Andrew Morgan for his involvement with Ponteland Cricket Club, particularly for his dedication in coaching juniors over many years.

RETIRING COUNCILLORS

This was the last meeting of the current Town Council and the Mayor made presentations of engraved photograph frames to Councillors Archie Cave and Alan Chilton who had both served on both the Town and former Borough Councils for a number of years. He also made presentations to Councillors Alan Mee and David Butler. Councillor Mrs Eileen Armstrong would also not be standing for the Town Council. The Mayor paid tribute to all retiring Councillors and thanked them for their hard work and contribution they had made over the years. He wished them well for the future.

GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Ponteland Youth Service

The Council approved the annual grant of £5,500 to Ponteland Youth Service towards the costs of their work with young people in the area.

Community Action Northumberland

CAN had submitted a request for a donation to all parish and town councils in Northumberland and donation of £100 was agreed in recognition of the excellent services provided by the organisation.

Dalton Village Hall

A request had been received from the hall for a supplementary grant, in addition to their usual annual donation, to address a woodworm problem in the floorboards which required treatment at a cost of £778 plus VAT. The Town Council agreed a supplementary grant of £500. The Hall committee will also be trying to carry out some fundraising for this purpose.

Darras Hall Estate Committee

Darras Hall Estate Committee had submitted a request for the annual donation towards the costs of upkeep of the bridlepath. A grant of £600 was approved.

PROJECTS REPORT

Memorial Hall

The planning application has been lodged with the County Council and is currently out for public consultation.

Street Information Signs

Proof copies of the paper map are available and have been circulated to Councillors for comments.

Skate Park

Arrangements are being made to have the requested noise survey carried out.

Repairs to brick walls at Waitrose Bridge

Work has now started on this contract.

Tree works at sub station and Darras Road

This project is now complete.

River bank repairs

The contract has been let to W L Straughan & Sons and will hopefully commence shortly.

War Memorial

Plans have been drawn up for proposed alterations to the war memorial and Councillors have commented upon them. The front wall requires attention as soon as possible, however quotes received were too expensive and it was suggested that further competitive prices which included the two new pillars were sought. The side walls require immediate repairs which were shown on photographs included within the report. The Town Council approved the outlined scheme and noted that further enquiries would be made using competitive quotations and possibly modified details in order for the scheme to be achieved at a reasonable cost.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on 18th March and the Council approved the following recommendation made by the Group: Quotes for the possible refurbishment of the bird hide at the Oxbow Lake would be sought, although it was recognised that it may not be possible to refurbish due to the present condition of the structure.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on 21st March and had made the following recommendations which were approved: In relation to the damaged verges on Callerton Lane, it was agreed to recommend the installation of grasscrete on both sides of the road and the Chairman of the Group agreed to measure up the site so that a tentative quote could be sought. It was also agreed to provide some funding towards the cost of manufacture and installation of ten signs for Darras Road. The location of the signs was to be discussed at the next meeting to be held on 17th April. The Chairman of the Working Party referred to the work carried out by the County Council on Ponteland Bridge. This involved the re-engraving of the wording and replacement of some stone balustrades. This had been welcomed by the Town Council who had been requesting this work for some time.

CIVIC SERVICE

The Mayor reported that the above event was scheduled to be held on Sunday 19th May.

BUDGET WISH LIST 2013-14

A report had been circulated relating to recommendations for the wish list for 2013-14. Councillors had indicated their priorities for the items included within the list as part of the budget process for 2013-14. It was agreed that the following schemes would be carried out as projects during 2013-14:

- Park path to the wild meadow
- Reinstatement of the base at the swings at Callerton Lane Play area
- An annual grant to Friends of Ponteland Park
- Replacement of some soft landscaping at Coates Institute garden.

It was agreed that the following be agreed as priorities in the next financial year 2014-15: improvement of footpath at Fox Covert Lane; fencing to the park. It was also agreed to develop the revamp of the public toilets at Thornhill Road as a longer term project and that funding for this be taken from the project development fund. Councillors also agreed to consider the proposal for a contribution towards a new all weather pitch once further details on other funding streams became available.

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



Andy gets Mayor's Award for long innings

Ponteland Cricket Club Chairman Andy Morgan was presented with the Town Council's annual meritorious award after 40 years of service.

Mayor Peter Cowey handed over the award and an engraved silver photograph frame at the Annual Town Meeting of Electors on 11th April to recognise Andy's dedication to the club he joined as a small boy, particularly in coaching juniors over many years.

Coun Cowey said: "It is no small measure of the man that despite the demands of his professional life he still finds time to carry out this work."

Photo by Trevor Walker

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Bike racks installed at Merton Hall

By Muriel Sobo

Transport by bike is increasing everywhere. It is good exercise, carbon friendly and completely sustainable if the bike doesn't get 'nicked' when it is parked.

Step forward the new administration at Merton Hall which has provided a completely new space with bike racks for chaining the bikes. Four of these racks were provided free by a national scheme 'Park that Bike,' that works with local authorities to help bike parking to be free and safe.

The costs of the design and construction were met by the Merton Hall Trustees and Councillor Dodds also provided £2,000 of his allowance towards it. The work was designed and carried out by the county council.

This tarmacked area on one side of the hall also has space for those who wish to park electric buggies and has been designed with no steps and easy access to the hall to help those who are less able.

Merton Hall regular Andy Hogg fastens his bike to the new rack.



Henry Robert's hair salon reaches 21 years

By Muriel Sobo

Henry Robert, better known to all his customers as Harry, has worked 21 years at his hairdressing business in the Toll House by the bridge in Ponteland.

That is success and congratulations are due to the gentle, generous man who runs it and seems to be a friend to everyone.

To celebrate this anniversary Harry ran a raffle with 21 prizes, and not any old prizes but beauty products, radios, wine, chocolates, perfumes and aftershaves, since his customers are both men and women. The prizes were beautifully wrapped and tickets were given to all his customers at no cost and later they were invited to draw a ticket and see if it matched a lovely gift.

Thank you Harry, and congratulations to you and your vivacious assistant Debbie. Long may you both prosper!



PONTELAND PARTY IN THE PARK: SUNDAY 9TH JUNE

Entertainment is promised for all the family at one of the village's key annual events, Ponteland Party in the Park, being held on Sunday 9th June from 1.30pm.

Admission is only £1, with children aged under 5 free.

LOCAL RESIDENTS MEET THE LIONS

By Lynne Tointon

Members of Ponteland Lions once again hosted their annual 'Meet the Lions' event at Ponteland Memorial Hall on March 16th.

The sun shone brightly as 120 senior residents from the local area, a few accompanied by carers, gathered for an afternoon's entertainment. Sherry or juice was served on arrival, then an hour of music and singing was ably performed by the Ponteland Repertory Society. Guests were later served a delicious home-made afternoon tea, which was followed by a bingo session and a raffle.

The event forms a major part of Ponteland Lions' commitment to serving the local community and is always well attended and enjoyed by the audience.

Lions wish to thank the two St. John's Ambulance volunteers who were on hand to offer assistance and also local businesses who generously donated raffle prizes.

250 for; 2,000 against

Letters flood in to council planners

Controversial plans for a 280-home development on green belt land at Birney Hill have generated more than 2,000 objections to Northumberland County Council – and 250 letters of support.

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".

A spokesperson for Northumberland County Council said: "We have received over 2,000 letters of objection and around 250 in support of the application by Lugano Developments Ltd for outline planning permission for land at Birney Hill Farm near Ponteland.

"We are progressing with the details involved in consideration of the application. We are currently planning to schedule a member site visit and public meeting for June, with a view to reporting the application to the July meeting of the West Area Planning Committee, subject to satisfactory progress with the application."

Find out more

Ponteland Town Council has lodged a formal objection to NCC and



details are available at www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk

Local people can find out more about the Birney Hill proposals on the www.pontelandfutures.co.uk

To view the application visit www.tinyurl.com/birneyhillplanningapplication

Anti-green belt development campaigner Ponteland Green Belt Group's website can be found at www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk

Town Council elections off as 12 Conservatives returned unopposed

There will be no Town Council elections in Ponteland on May 2 – because all 12 Conservative candidates have been returned unopposed.

Ponteland North's Conservative county councillor Richard Dodd has also secured another term of office, as no one has stood against him either.

Party colleague and Ponteland South with Heddon county councillor Peter Jackson faces the sole Liberal Democrat challenge in the parish from Hexham-based Ian Sotheran.

Meanwhile sitting Conservatives Eileen Armstrong (Ponteland East & Stannington) and Veronica Jones (Ponteland West) are both being challenged by UK Independence Party candidates - Collin Dickinson in Ponteland East and David Nicholson in Ponteland West.

Retiring town councillors were: David Butler, Archie Cave, Alan Mee, Alan Chilton and Eileen Armstrong.

The new town councillors are:

PONTELAND EAST

Christine Caisley / Sue Johnson / Lesley Noble

PONTELAND NORTH

Richard Dodd / Christine Greenwell / Adam Shanley

PONTELAND SOUTH

Peter Cowey / Robin Ramsay / Carl Rawlings

PONTELAND WEST

Joyce Butcher / Rob Punton / Elizabeth Thompson

A colorful advertisement for "Raggy Heirlooms". It features a large pink flower on the left and a small bird on the right. The text is arranged in a clean, modern font. At the bottom, it says "Open weekends and Bank holiday weekends by arrangement".

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



A political row erupts over the stalled town centre regeneration in another bumper letters' page...

'Disastrous state of affairs' for town centre regeneration

On behalf of the community of Ponteland, we must express the great dismay that was felt when we became aware of the unilateral deadline and ultimatum set out in the letters from the Deputy Chief Executive, Kate Roe, to the MKP Partnership.

The focus of these letters is whether the library in Ponteland is part of the regeneration project, or not.

From the outset the design brief, approved by the community, included the library site in the overall area of Merton Way under consideration. Subsequently Northumberland County Council, during financial discussions with the developer and separately during meetings at which community representatives were present, stated that the library was not going to be included in the overall development area.

This was in direct contravention with the original brief.

The developer requires the library to be part of the scheme, for financial viability reasons, but the County Council has stated that it has no long term plans in place for moving the library. For negotiations in respect of such a major project, developed initially by the community, to have reached such a depth displays a disastrous state of affairs.

The Town Centre Regeneration scheme is to be lost as a result of the inability to reach agreement by negotiation. The failure by the County to confirm the future of the library in relation to the scheme has been a major factor in reaching this impasse.

This is totally unacceptable and we would request the withdrawal of the ultimatum, confirmation that the library remains within the scheme and a sense of real purpose is devoted by both parties towards moving the project forward to the next stage.

P Cowey, Mayor, Ponteland Town Council
B R Prickett, Chairman, Ponteland Community Partnership

Meadow Court residents face daily problem of school run traffic

In common with many other Ponteland residents, my husband and I have been enjoying the Easter holiday break when parents' cars are not blocking our streets from Monday to Friday at school times.

We dread the increase in school traffic. If more homes are built here, the problem is bound to increase alarmingly. In term time, residents face daily problems in Meadow Court. During the last week of term, I observed the following incidents.

Cars were seen entering residents' drives in order to turn round, instead of using the turning area at the bottom of the street. Gouge marks on the pavement can be seen as evidence of this common practice.

At the entrance to the cut through to Dunsgreen, a parent was seen at 3 o'clock sitting with a flask of coffee and a book, while waiting there for 40 minutes. The parents are parking earlier and earlier to ensure their favourite place.

Some drives were blocked for 20 minutes, while parents waited with engines running. Are these parents aware that the fumes are harmful to children as they walk from school to the waiting cars or do they not care?

On one afternoon, a parked car in Meadow Court near the junction with Eastern Way meant that the cars exiting had to pull over to the wrong side of the road to enter Eastern Way. This prevented any car from entering Meadow Court.

A queue in both directions built up, because parents' parked cars on Eastern Way blocked the road and the queue built up to the exit of Meadow Court. The waiting cars on the opposite side of Eastern Way had to reverse to allow the exiting car in Meadow Court out and waiting cars from both directions to enter. This was a dangerous situation as the cars were reversing along Eastern Way at the same time as children tried to cross the road.

Yet another incident occurred when I tried to return home at a pickup time. Parked cars meant that once again Meadow Court

was reduced to a single lane. A car pulled out onto my side of the road, as I pulled into a recess to allow her to pass. Instead of passing, she stopped her car and started a mobile phone conversation. After a short while I'm afraid I lost all patience and placed my hand hard down on the horn.

We are already looking forward to the next school holiday.

Name and address withheld by consent

New Town Council HQ plan is ill conceived and unimaginative

I see that the Town Council is proposing to build itself some new offices round the back of the Memorial Hall, in that gap between the hall and the caretaker's dwelling.

Two storeys are proposed in an ungainly, flat roofed, lump of a building that will seriously detract from the view from both tennis courts and bowling green. Hitherto, buildings erected in this vicinity to serve these facilities have been modest, domestic in scale and style, and have respected the setting in which they find themselves. This latest proposal does none of these things.

If the Town Council is intent on establishing some kind of municipal presence I would have thought that the back end of the Memorial Hall was not the most appropriate location but there are other aspects that make this a very bad idea.

The Hall was put up in 1922 when the population of the parish amounted to some 1,200 souls. It was pretty basic then, and remains an awkward unattractive space, ill suited to serve the needs of a current population of over 12,000 residents at the onset of the 21st century. It urgently needs to be replaced.

To attach council offices to the rear of this venerable structure will only serve to put off the day when a decent new facility can be provided. It makes little or no economic sense.

Almost from the very beginning the Memorial Hall has been home to the Ponteland Repertory Society, an organisation that has provided a wide range of theatrical entertainment in the

*See news story with County Council response on page 4.

village for well over 80 years. Because of the restricted nature of the accommodation it has never been easy to stage shows here but that situation would be much worsened if this scheme were to go ahead. There would be a significant reduction in dressing room space and a loss of those areas that have up to now been utilised for the construction and storage of scenery.

I find it quite astonishing that a body charged with the enhancement and protection of our community facilities, would want to discourage cultural activity in the village in favour of a few run of the mill office spaces.

I understand that a number of Town Councillors will not be seeking re-election in May. We can only hope that their replacements arrive in time to head off this ill-conceived, unimaginative proposal.

John Hague
Ponteland Civic Society

Quick fix for flood prevention

Over recent years I have watched the various flood prevention schemes in Ponteland with interest and at times scepticism.

Over 60 years ago as a lad I fished for minnows with my friends in the central channel of the bridge because it had a smooth cement base (similar to the channels on either side) and no sharp stones to cut bare feet. It was always possible then to use the walkways on either side of the channel without getting wet feet, even in higher than usual river flows.

The river immediately upstream of the bridge was always very shallow, running over bright gravel with a deeper stretch near the corner higher upstream. Now it is much deeper since the river level has been raised due to the large accumulation of gravel beneath the central arch.

This is being made even worse by a wall of gravel which has built up for about 100 yards immediately downstream of the bridge effectively holding back water flow. This wall of gravel is now diverting the current towards the Diamond Inn and eroding the bank on that side of the river instead of flowing down what used to be the central watercourse.

If this gravel was removed and the stream bed returned to its condition of the 1950s, the fall in water level upstream of the bridge would be instantaneous and certainly reduce water levels in times of floods as well as giving riverside dwellers a small measure of peace of mind.

I have no doubt it will be argued that removal of this gravel may affect the bridge foundations. Why should it if the work was done with common sense to return to its original design?

It really is time someone grasped the nettle and removed this gravel, which will certainly help reduce water levels in times of flood rather than wasting money on cosmetic bankside work which has little effect.

Keith Thompson
*North Grange
Ponteland*

If Lugano's energy bill claims are right, I'll have one of their new builds!

Lugano's publication 'Village Outlook' contains yet more wild claims.

'Energy bills at Birney Hill would be typically £320 per annum', they claim. Simple maths indicate that for 87p per day, purchasers will be able to light, heat the house, do all the cooking, washing and drying of both ourselves and clothes, and still have sufficient energy to power the TV and computer.

Wow! If they will put that in a legally binding document, I want to have one of those new builds!

DP Rundle
*Whinfell Rd
Darras Hall*

Green belt must be preserved to keep Ponteland distinct from city

What a hypocrite Cllr Henri Murison portrays, to call himself the Cabinet Member for Quality of Life, Newcastle City Council, when he suggests that Guy Opperman is trying to make political capital out of supporting the people of the Ponteland area.

I wonder where Cllr Henri Murison lives; at least Guy is trying to help the local community in his area.

Newcastle needs to clean up the inner city brown field sites before any thought is given to taking over any other locations. It is because of the lack of improving the city that people do not wish to live there; they are just looking for the easy options to build on green belt land, making it more profitable for companies to make financial gains.

Having moved to the area after leaving Newcastle some 20 years ago, where there was a deterioration of amenities along with a rise in crime, we do not want to bring the city's lower standards closer to Ponteland,

whose rural feel and community spirit would be greatly affected.

Ian Grange
*The Wynde
Darras Hall*

Please don't dump your doggy bags over my hedge

I have recently discovered at least eight bags of dog excrement dumped over the hedge in the corner of my garden.

I have had the unenviable task of cleaning them up only to find another had been deposited yesterday evening. Perhaps this will serve to remind this totally irresponsible dog owner to please take this dog's excrement home with them and not expect a non-dog owner to clear up after them.

Mrs B Johnston
*Woodlands
Darras Hall*

Bus stop appeal

I and many friends were very pleased when the new bus stop was put on the Broadway opposite the Darras Hall garage site.

There are many of us, particularly in Darras Mews and nearby, who are not as young as we used to be and appreciate being able to walk just a short distance for the bus to get into the village centre or town.

Some of us, unfortunately, cannot walk far at all and cannot stand for any length of time; we can also suffer from the wind and rain if we have to wait very long. It may seem like a luxury to some, but we would like to ask if the Town Council could consider putting up a small bus shelter, with somewhere to sit, so that we can have a little ease whilst waiting.

Mrs Dorothea Maxwell
Address supplied

Where can I recycle tinfoil and aluminium?

I wondered if any readers know where I can take tinfoil/aluminium for recycling.

None of the recycling bins list it, and I save all my aluminium trays etc and milk bottle tops, and would hate to discard them.

Susan Ferguson
*Meadowvale
Darras Hall*

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.

June issue deadlines: The June issue will be delivered on Friday May 31. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday May 13. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the June issue.

What's on...

Ponteland U3A monthly meeting

Ponteland U3A meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm in St Mary's Church Hall. On 1st May our speaker will be Sally Hardy whose topic is Saving the Red Squirrel. Visitors are welcome. Entrance is free. Come along to find out about the many activities of your U3A.

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 May 3rd, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html

Ponteland WI Coffee Morning

Ponteland WI is having a Coffee Morning on Saturday 4th May in the Lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall - 10am start. Have a coffee, browse the stalls and catch up with friends.

Ponteland Bowling Club 'taster' sessions

On each of the four Saturdays in May, Ponteland Bowling Club in Darras Road, next to the Memorial Hall, will be hosting free 'taster' mornings. Sessions are from 10.30am until 12noon. Why not come along and give the game a try, everyone welcome and no age limit. See our website for more club information at www.pontelandbowlingclub.co.uk

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

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

Ponteland Lions Club

Ponteland Lions now hold a business meeting at their

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

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday May 13th, our AGM, is Prof John Derry who will talk on "Bluff King Hal". 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.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our meeting on the Monday 13th May will be a 'show and tell' session, followed by a social event. Plants brought in by our members will be on display. The members will talk about the plants and there here will be the opportunity to ask questions and seek advice. Visitors welcome. 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. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com (0191) 4132574.

Ponteland and District RNLI Ladies' Luncheon Club

The club meets on the second

Tuesday of every month except during June, July and August. The next meeting will be held on 14th May at 12noon in the Memorial Hall. Lunch will be followed with a talk by Major Enderby on Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeoman Of The Guard. Visitors are most welcome but are requested to ring the secretary on (01661) 824880 to book lunch.

Ponteland Community Partnership AGM

The Community Partnership AGM will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 15th May in the small meeting room in Merton Hall. This is an open meeting and members of the public are invited to attend.

Friends of Ponteland Park

Friends of Ponteland Park on Saturday 18th May 9.30am-1pm are pleased to be present at the Northumberland County Council 'Step in to Spring' event at St Mary's Church Hall. This is to showcase what Ponteland has to offer older people interested in maintaining or widening their activities and enjoyment in Ponteland. Also, on Tuesday 21st May at 10.30am we have the official opening of the Boardwalk and Dipping Platform by the Oxbow Lake in Ponteland Park. All welcome, refreshments will be served afterwards at the Scout Hut.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Our May meeting is being held on Tuesday 21st May at 7.30pm in Ponteland Memorial Hall. Where there will be a demonstration by Andrew Grisewood of Hayton (National), 'Bejewelled!' + plant stall.

Merton Hall Recreation Centre AGM

The 2013 Annual General Meeting of Merton Hall will be held in Merton Hall on Thursday 23rd May at 2pm. All are 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). Visitors' fee £3 (includes tea/coffee and biscuits). Further information from Carol Bird (01661) 881395.

Ponteland Rotary Club annual golf competition

Ponteland Rotary Club is holding its second annual golf competition at Ponteland Golf Club on Tuesday 28th May, a charity AM/AM 4-ball Team Stableford competition. All proceeds to Rotary Charities. Full details from Rotarian Eddie Dunn on (01661) 824888.

Merton Hall May excursion

The May trip to Gillsland is one of our favourites. The outing is planned for Thursday 30th May, includes lunch, entertainment and afternoon tea for £30. Please contact Merton Hall for more information. Meet new and old friends for a chat and a cuppa, it's only 30p and the second cup is free (Monday to Saturday morning). Keep fit and flexible with chair based exercise every Monday at 11am till 11.45am, no need to book just come and join in for £1.50.

Ponteland Floral Art Club Coronation Tea

Ponteland Floral Art Club invites you to a celebratory Coronation Tea at Merton Hall on Thursday 30th May from 2pm - 4pm. Cost £4.50 to include tea or coffee, freshly made sandwiches, a cake and a scone with jam.

Ponteland's weekly market

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

Pont Badminton Club

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



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OPTOMETRISTS & CONTACT LENS PRACTITIONERS



Opportunist thieves forecast as warmer weather arrives



Total Policing

By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Community Beat Manager

In the period between 14th March and 11th April we had three crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- one damage to restaurant
- one theft other
- one public order offence.

The damage and public order offences have been detected. Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the other offence.

As the weather begins to change (at last!) more people are spending time outdoors, either with sporting activities or in the garden, and it is a good time to remind you all of the need for security.

If you leave items outside unattended there is always the chance an opportunist thief passing by will take advantage, so please be aware and consider how easy

it would be for someone to remove your property. If you think like a thief, you can prevent a theft.

We have two speed detecting devices which we utilise from Ponteland and share with Prudhoe and Corbridge. These are deployed following requests from residents who contact police with concerns over speeding and as such we set up the equipment in places where it can be used to full effect.

As we are working on the roadside we have to comply with health and safety and wear hi-visibility clothing so naturally we can be seen from a distance. If this gives a warning to motorists then it hopefully makes them aware we are there whether they are speeding or not.

Our main aim is to promote road safety and prevent motorists from speeding. If you have an issue with speeding in your street, please contact us with your details and we can discuss how best to approach

the problem. We will continue our speed checks so please curb your speed.

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 11th May 9.30am–10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison 18th May 11.30am–12.30pm at Belsay village shop
- PC Rob Anderson 1st June 11.30am–12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

We also have engagement days at these venues and dates:

- 15th May 1pm–3pm Stamfordham / Belsay.
- 22nd May 10am–12noon Merton Way / 1pm–3pm Broadway

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Ponteland Golf Club

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Golf North East, 2008

Both playing & social memberships are currently being offered at Ponteland Golf Club. Membership categories start from the age of 10 and there is a range of payment options currently available for both ladies and gentlemen. There is currently no waiting list for ANY category. The club is actively looking to recruit young adults and has recently introduced intermediate membership categories with no joining fee for 18 to 29 year olds.

For information contact:
Secretary Greg Waugh at:
secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk
Tel: 01661 822689



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Thursdays 9.30am-10-15am

£3.50

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Ponies trek into Ponteland Manor

By June Atkinson

Residents at Ponteland Manor enjoyed a special visit by two ponies from Darlington's K&L Pony Therapy.

Being up close, able to touch the friendly Dartmoor pony and the Shetland pony clearly brought great joy to the elderly residents, some of whom are now too frail to go outdoors themselves. The Dartmoor pony stayed downstairs, followed by someone carrying a bucket, just in case! The little Shetland went up in the lift to be greeted, stroked, cooed over and admired by delighted residents. Its coat was like velvet and its behaviour impeccable.

What a joy, bringing back memories for several people of younger days when they enjoyed the company of equine friends. This was a wonderful, uplifting occasion when residents, encouraged by staff, enjoyed meeting these two ponies. I was almost in tears at some of the emotion shown by them as they stroked the friendly four legged guests. Many thanks to K&L Pony Therapy for making it such a special day.

Major effort from Ponteland businesses for Comic Relief

Ponteland businesses generously contributed £350 to Comic Relief thanks to the efforts of Jane Henderson and Avril Taylor of Major Family Law.

The pair went out and about in Ponteland Village on Friday March 15, knocking on doors and shaking their big red bucket at local businesses to collect donations.

Businesses who kindly contributed were: Major Family Law; Strettles; Iain Nicholson & Co; Look Twice; Taylors Chemists; Rialtos; Henry's Hairdressing; Nicholson & Morgan; Jan's Kitchen; Rowlands accountants; Pattinsons; HSBC; Panache; Lloyds TSB; Trading Places; Peter Harrison; The Rendezvous; staff & customers of The Diamond; Ponteland Hardware; Q Hairdressers; Poppys; Ponteland Hair and Beauty; Mackley & Steven Opticians; Gills Fish & Chip Shop.



ADVERTISING FEATURE

Stepping into Spring: Saturday 18th May

Older people in Ponteland are being invited to an exciting morning of health, wellbeing and leisure taster sessions.

The event is being organised by Ageing Well in Ponteland and Northumbria Healthcare Trust, and is supported by local organisations.

Ageing Well is about involving older people in their community and helping to keep them active, connected and well, and the county-wide programme has been recognised nationally.

Ageing Well in Ponteland initially came together in partnership with the Ponteland Community Partnership and the Town Council to find the funding for the successful, one day a week, Hopper bus which takes people who do not have transport to the doctors, shops, or other

social events, lunch or meeting with friends.

"Stepping into Spring" is on Saturday 18th May at St Mary's Church Hall. The morning will start at 10am and run until 1pm. All activities and refreshments are free on the day and there will be opportunities to try them out or just to find out more about what is on offer locally.

Organisations will also be on hand to talk about their support services and people will be able to find out about social activities and exercise classes in the Ponteland area.

The Hopper bus will be available on the day to take residents to the event and back home again.

If you need transport or further information, contact Janet Boakes on 07768 467334.



Ageing Well
in Northumberland



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