

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Residents lose long running
bar/bistro battle

Life for jealous lover who
murdered Ponteland mum

Appeal after vandals wreck
cricket club nets

Oh brother... what a result!

Plus... win New Year's Eve dinner for two and overnight stay: see p11

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

Produced by Cian creative pr



Jumping for joy after record exam success at Ponteland High

Retiring headteacher Stephen Prandle is going out on a high as his Ponteland A level and GCSE students celebrate record successes this year.

Twenty-three A level students gained three or more A* or A grades compared with 20 last summer, 27% scored top A* to A grades, and the average point score per student increased from 831 to 850.

All four Ponteland High students who applied for places at Cambridge this year were successful: Adam Barker (A* in Maths, Further Maths and Physics, A in Chemistry) will be reading Natural Sciences; while Sam Moody (A* in English Literature, A in French, General Studies and History), Hannah Stoddart (A* in English Literature, A in French, General Studies, History and Critical Thinking) and Imogen Garner (A* in Geography and General Studies, A in English Literature and History) will all be reading History.

In the GCSE exams 71% of students achieved 5 or more A*-C grades including English and Maths – up from last year's 70%.

Three students achieved all A* grades, with Jessica Keating and Caroline Garner getting 11 and Andrew Bagnall 10, while another 12 students achieved all A* or A grades: Greg Chambers, Felicity Clarke, John Garner, Olivia Herford, Jack Heslop, Rachael Hickey, Catherine Hunter, Elizabeth MacGowan, Meghan Phillips, Jessica Rea, Ashleigh Brown, and Lewis Fraser.

Stephen Prandle, who retired as Headteacher at the end of August along with Associate Headteacher Anita Brown, said: "All of our students deserve congratulations for their dedication and determination in making this

a record year for our school. We have a fantastic staff at Ponteland High, and these results show that we are continuing to make an excellent school even better."

Cover shot by Trevor Walker:

Grade A twins Caroline and John Garner

Page 3 pics by Keith Robertson:

Jumping for joy - Laura Murphy and Rachel Morgan celebrate.

Hannah Stoddart, off to study History at Cambridge, and Sarah Briggs, who is reading Medicine at Aberdeen.

Imogen Garner (History, Cambridge), Anna Sutcliffe (Northumbria University) Rachel Smedley (Mechanical Engineering, Leeds), Sam Moody (History, Cambridge) and Adam Barker (Natural Sciences, Cambridge).

Stephen Prandle with Vice President Sarah Briggs, President Anna Sutcliffe and Vice President Adam Barker.



Appeal after mindless vandals wreck cricket club nets

By Andy Morgan, Chairman Ponteland Cricket Club

Ponteland Cricket Club is once again enjoying a successful season despite the inclement weather and repeated acts of vandalism at the ground based at the leisure centre.

The club runs five senior teams and four junior teams at different age groups ranging from under 11s to under 18s. It also runs coaching sessions for children from as young as eight.

The senior sides have had a particularly good year in local cricket and the club's 1st XI have reached the Northumberland Smithson Cup Final being held at Benwell Hill Cricket Club on September 9.

The club is run entirely by volunteers who put considerable effort into providing a well run sports club for our community. Membership is open to all.

We have been very fortunate in the past to receive financial support from various different sources including Ponteland Town Council, Sport England, and the England & Wales Cricket Board. Grant funding has been used to improve facilities at the ground including the construction of an all weather practice net.

Unfortunately the practice net seems to have become an attraction for local youths who seem intent on causing as much damage as they can to it. Those responsible have taken to climbing on top of the net and using it as a trampoline.

This had caused considerable damage to the structure and created holes in the nets themselves. The club estimates that the cost of repairs will be in excess of £3,000.

It has always been a mystery why some teenagers seem intent on creating mindless damage to facilities that are being created for the benefit of the whole community. Police have been very supportive and regularly patrol the grounds of the leisure centre but they cannot be there all the time.

It is perhaps unlikely that those responsible for the damage will read this publication, but if they do, the cricket club would appreciate if they would leave the club's equipment and facilities alone so that they can be used for the purpose for which they have been provided.



Residential Sales and Lettings



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PROJECTS REPORT

Coping stones at Waitrose Bridge

Approval from the Environment Agency is still awaited.

Bridge redesign

The work will be carried out when the river levels had dropped.

River bank repairs

The Council agreed to engage the services of a Consulting Engineer to progress this project with the Environment Agency.

Street information signs

Replacement maps have been ordered for Main Street and Broadway.

Skate Park

Discussions have taken place with a view to submitting a planning application for the skate park.

Statue at Coates Green

The necessary repairs to the plinth have started. The Council also agreed to light the statue and from various quotes received it was agreed to go ahead with a quote from a local company to enable this project to be completed.

Park path lighting project

Some quotes have been received for the design of the scheme based on preliminary layouts however a further quotation is awaited.

War memorial

Following consultation with the Memorial Hall a revised design is to be prepared ensuring that all necessary remedial work to the front and side walls and steps is carried out. The grass will be largely retained.

Land survey

This project is now underway following an initial meeting with the Council's solicitor.

Repairs to brick walls at Waitrose Bridge

A detailed specification is to be prepared to enable this work to be carried out. A sum is available within the budget.

Repainting of Millennium Bridge

It is hoped that this work can be carried out in the autumn. A specification is required and prices will be sought. Permission from the Environment Agency will also be required.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Council approved grants to the Friends of Ponteland Park for support with administrative costs in the sum of £250 and to the Ponteland Memorial Hall towards their general running costs in the sum of £6000.

MEMORIAL TREES POLICY

The Council had recently agreed a policy for memorial seats and it was thought that a similar policy was required in respect of memorial trees. The Council will need to prepare a list of tree species and sizing for the guidance of donors. The policy includes details of maintenance and replacement and also covers the acceptance of trees as gifts. The Council endorsed the policy with effect from 1 January 2013, although the Clerk was given delegated authority to negotiate similar terms with any donors between now and that date for the sake of uniformity. Details of the policy would be published in Pont News & Views and on the Council's website by November 1 once details of a list of accepted trees had been compiled.

PONTELAND LOCAL PLAN

See article on p20.

CEMETERIES – TRANSFER OF SERVICES FROM NCC

The Town Council has reminded that responsibility for Prestwick Cemetery would be transferred to its control from 1 April 2013. Details of possible costs involved had been received. The Council had to decide how this service was to be run and several options were available which would be explored over the coming months.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on 18 July and items discussed included details of cycle training and various initiatives in Ponteland, parking issues and the Town Council's submission to Northumberland County Council in respect of the Local Transport Plan. The Working Party had considered meeting the cost of having the Darras Road bridge repainted, however it was agreed that this would be put forward as a request as part of the Local Transport Plan submission. Various issues of speeding traffic had been discussed and it was agreed that these matters would be raised with the Police at the next LMAPS meeting. A speed survey was also going to be requested at the Cheviot View area of the A696 to ascertain the level of speeding traffic leaving Ponteland.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Veronica Jones reported on various problems that had occurred with the grass cutting in Ponteland. She explained the reasons for this which included the weather conditions and reported that Northumberland County Council had now engaged another operative who would be based in Ponteland. The plans to outsource some of the Council's services had been paused for the time being to

allow discussion at an all party group of elected members. A meeting had been held with the leader of another local authority in relation to their policy on wind turbines.

MAYOR'S REPORT

It was reported that Ponteland Community Partnership would be holding a public meeting at the Memorial Hall on 21 August. This would hopefully inform the public about the current situation with the proposed developers who were interested in Ponteland, the Northumberland County Council Core Strategy, the Ponteland Local Plan and the proposals of Newcastle City Council to build near to the boundary. The Mayor and Councillor Ramsay had attended a meeting organised by Ponteland Community Partnership and attended by other representatives to discuss the arrangements for this day. A meeting had also been held with representatives of Lugano and Ponteland Community Partnership to hear about their feedback from their open day, the meeting being a forerunner of what they will present at their next public meeting, possibly in September. See pages 7-9.

This report is based on the minutes of the Ponteland Town Council meeting held on August 8.



Proposals for the future of Ponteland

Thursday 6 September 2pm-8pm

Memorial Hall: Lounge

Saturday 8 September 10am-2pm

Ponteland Leisure Centre: Function Suite

On 14 June, Lugano hosted a Planning Ideas Day to ask for people's views on the long term future of Ponteland.

As well as giving their views on a range of issues, people told us they wanted more information and to see proposals.

We listened, carefully collated feedback, and from that information began to work up our initial proposals.

We would now invite you to an exhibition to see and discuss these first proposals.

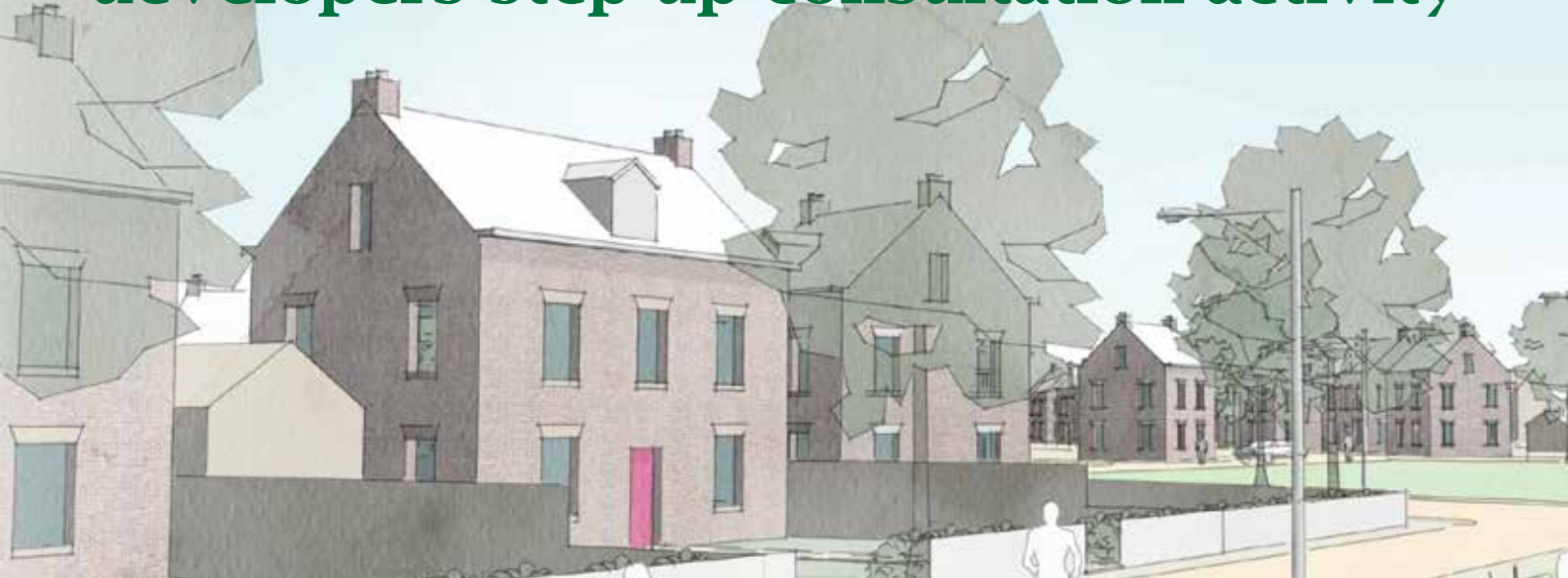
Everyone is welcome. We look forward to meeting you there.

The exhibition will explain how issues raised at the Planning Ideas Day have been addressed.

The proposals will cover:

- Countryside and ecology
- Village centre
- Community facilities
- Transport
- Jobs and business
- Flooding and drainage
- Housing provision and design
- Initial development proposals
- Making it happen
- Overall vision

MP's Green Belt pledge as housing developers step up consultation activity



As the two developers looking to create major new housing schemes on the outskirts of Ponteland are stepping up their consultation activity, the public backlash has seen furious public meetings over the past month and a petition signed by nearly 1,500 residents. Pont News & Views reports on the latest news from both the Lugano Group and Banks Property...

High turnout for first public exhibition of Garden Village plans

More than 300 people from across Ponteland and the surrounding area attended the first public exhibition of plans for a high-quality residential development.

North East-based Banks Property hosted the event at Ponteland Leisure Centre on August 15 to view outline plans for the proposed Ponteland Garden Village scheme at Clickemin Farm, which would be located on agricultural land on the south east side of the town, on either side of the A696.

The company says the scheme is being designed to help to address the town's acknowledged need for new housing, which will in turn support its long-term well-being by attracting and retaining young people and families.

It has pledged to design the scheme in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, with around one-third of the development area maintained as landscaped public open space.

Banks Property said the exhibition marked the beginning of an ongoing public engagement process to enable residents to voice their opinions, with the feedback received being used to help shape the final proposals for the scheme.

Mark Dowdall, environment and community director of Banks Property, said: "In holding this first exhibition, we were looking to get as much feedback as possible from local people about the ideas we're putting forward and we're grateful to everyone who took the time to attend.

"We firmly believe that everyone has a right to the opportunity to live in the place that they wish to be, and our aim now is to

establish a meaningful dialogue with every part of the community around how this goal can best be achieved in Ponteland, where there isn't enough available space to meet its housing needs by redeveloping brownfield sites alone."

A Banks spokesman said the Ponteland Garden Village scheme would include a range of community and environmental improvements that would be identified in partnership with local people, with the initial plans being considered including a proposal for a major upgrade of sports and leisure facilities.

He added that Northumberland County Council's recent Employment Land Review also identified Ponteland as having a need for new commercial development, and Banks' proposals could also help meet this need by providing land and accommodation for employment use that will create new opportunities for local people and businesses.

Anyone who was unable to attend the exhibition, but who would like more information on the Ponteland Garden Village proposals can contact the Banks community relations team at ponteland@banksgroup.co.uk or by calling (0191) 378 6100.

A visual of the Ponteland Garden Village scheme.



Independent group holds its own consultation event



By Brian Prickett
Chairman, Ponteland Community Partnership

The consultation event, held by the Development Group of the Partnership in Ponteland Memorial Hall on Tuesday August 21 was well attended, both in the afternoon drop-in session and the evening presentation and discussion session.

The aim of the event was to put before the community the essential facts about potential developments in the Green Belt around Ponteland and give the background as to why developers were showing so much interest in the area.

Explanations were given about the Localism Bill, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the legal aspects of the planning system. There was discussion about the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan by the Town Council, with an offer of the community having a meaningful involvement in its preparation.

Also a link was established with the Newcastle West Green Belt Protection Campaign, as well as an assessment of the actual number of houses needed in the Ponteland area as opposed to the statistical assessment by the County Council.

Jon Aydon, the Hexham Constituency Office Manager, was able to bring the meeting up to date with the efforts of our MP Guy Opperman, to oppose incursions by developers into the Green Belt in our region, as well as being prepared to refer back queries raised in the discussions. Peter McManus, from the Westminster office also attended the afternoon session.

One of the main outcomes was that the recently established Development Group should be put on a more formal basis as a working group with links to Ponteland Community Partnership, but formed from a larger group of members who represent the wishes of the overall community.

It was also agreed that a further meeting would be held, when necessary, to keep the community informed of developments, as well as being kept up to date via Pont News & Views, and also via our new website www.pontelandpcp.co.uk

MP vows to continue fight as 1,500 sign petition against Green Belt plans

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman has pledged to continue fighting plans to build housing on the Green Belt as he revealed a petition against now has nearly 1,500 signatories.

The MP said: "I don't dispute we need more housing, especially affordable housing. However I simply do not believe huge expensive housing estates sprawling over the countryside is the answer.

"We must protect our Green Belt and I am proud of the campaigns I am fighting locally in both Ponteland and Hexham on that very issue. We have now got almost 1,500 signatures on our petition to protect the Ponteland Green Belt and are out on the doorstep collecting more signatures.

"I have been very clear in the past that I oppose the threat that over development poses to local communities that don't have the infrastructure to cope.

"The threat to the Green Belt around Ponteland in particular is very worrying. The Government was absolutely right to strengthen protection for the Green Belt in its recent changes to the planning system.

"However until the County Council gets its act together and signs off its Local Development Framework local people are right to be concerned at the impact on the farmland and Green Belt surrounding our towns and villages.

"I will keep up our campaign against the unsustainable level of development in our area."

Estate Committee pledges to keep close eye on developments: letters p10.

Developer to reveal plans at consultation events next week

Proposals by Lugano Group for the long term future of Ponteland will be the focus of two exhibitions being held next week.

The consultation events are being held on Thursday September 6 from 2pm-8pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall, and Saturday September 8 from 10am-2pm at Ponteland Leisure Centre.

They follow up Lugano's Planning Ideas Day in June, which attracted over 400 local people.

A Lugano spokesperson said: "As well as giving their views on a range of issues at the June event, residents also said they wanted more information and to see proposals. Lugano has listened to all the feedback and from that information has begun to work up initial proposals.

"The exhibition, staffed by architects, environmental, engineering and planning specialists, will give people a chance to see and discuss Lugano's proposals and look at how issues raised at the Planning Ideas Day have been addressed. Everyone is welcome."

Key issues identified at the first event included countryside and ecology, village centre, education and leisure, transport, jobs and business, flooding and drainage, house types and design, initial development proposals and overall vision.

See advert on p7.



Your letters

A pledge by Darras Hall Estate Committee and confusion over tree and grass verge maintenance in this month's letters page...

Estate Committee keeping close eye on Green Belt housing plans

It is often asked why the Darras Hall Estate Committee does not enter into debates or correspondence on matters outside the estate and in particular the current one on proposed housing developments in fields surrounding the estate.

The Committee is not a political entity and is not elected to represent your views on these matters but is elected only to administer the Trust Deed and Byelaws of the estate, therefore it is not appropriate to formally make comment on this particular subject.

However I can assure you that the boundaries of the estate are being closely monitored for any encroachment, in fact, any national or local plan that involves lands within the estate come under the jurisdiction of the Trust Deed and Byelaws.

Members of the Committee are residents and entitled to voice their personal opinion, but that is what it is - their personal opinion, not the committee's.

The two groups Lugano and Banks have not been in contact with the Committee so I am unable to report on their proposals. However there has been, and will be, more public consultation meetings.

I am also aware that a development group has been formed which is a sub group of the Ponteland Community Partnership who will be keeping in touch with the developers. Membership of this group is open to people of Ponteland including members of the Estate Committee who can sit on it in their own right.

To be helpful the estate office is very central and if you do have an opinion on the developments please put it writing and the office will act as a post box by passing it to the appropriate recipients.

Needless to say we are all affected by the proposals and the Estate Committee will be keeping a watching brief.

Michael Dainty
Chairman Darras Hall Estate Committee

Grass verge maintenance by homeowners is a recipe for disaster

I read with interest Councillor Ramsay's article in Pont News & Views (August issue).

I have always been under the impression that the grass verges were the property/responsibility of the Council. This is due to the fact that they are in place of footpaths of solid construction and are therefore for the use of the public.

I really do think that encouraging residents to cut and plant out borders is a recipe for disaster.

I believe that advocating private planting of flower beds in public areas is a bad idea and will make the estate look messy. Everyone has a personal view of what is attractive - and this is what a garden is for. Some people will prefer small shrubs, others little flowers and it may even come to the situation where gnomes and statues raise their heads!

My concern is also that someone decides to plant out a border then loses interest and it is left to weeds to take over.

If, as you say, the verges are the homeowners' responsibility, I wonder why the Council has cut them in the past. I would be grateful if you would confirm that your comment on the grass verges is, in fact, correct.

Angela Dupre
Eastern Way
Darras Hall

Is tree maintenance my responsibility – or the Council's?

Having read Councillor Ramsay's article in Pont News about who is responsible for the grass verges outside our homes I wonder whether Ponteland Town Council has any responsibility for the trees on council land adjoining our property on Rothley Close, Ponteland.

The tree in question is a silver birch which must now be in the region of 60 feet or more high. We have lived in this property for 25 years and at that time the tree was an acceptable height.

We now find that in the high winds we have been experiencing in the last few years it is quite unnerving watching how the tree blows with a whiplash effect and quite large branches are being snapped off and landing in our garden. My worry being that the whole tree will through time come down and do real damage.

Since 1999 I have been requesting Northumberland County Council and Ponteland

Town Council through various councillors to lop some branches off the tree to make it a reasonable height as it greatly reduces the amount of sunlight in the garden in the afternoon.

I would be interested to hear your views on my request.

Mrs Lynne Hendry
Rothley Close
Ponteland

Sorry! Hedges are your responsibility – grass verges are ours!

A slip by the contributor – me – in last month's article headed 'Verging on the meticulous' stated that the homeowner had to cut the grass on public land in front of their property.

It should, of course, have said it is the hedge that is the homeowner's responsibility. Hedges should be cut back to at least two metres from the kerb line. This keeps the verge clear for pedestrians, provided overhanging branches are also removed.

Of course if anyone is willing to go the second mile and cut the grass as well, it would be even better! But this is not a mandatory requirement. Apologies for any confusion caused.

Coun Robin Ramsay
South Ward
Ponteland Town Council

If you want to have a go, contact me!

It has come to my attention that the Council staff in the Meadowfield office have had callers who have been less than civil, at times even bordering on the abusive.

This must stop now. If anyone wants to let off steam contact me directly, not the Council staff, who carry out what Councillors or I ask them to do. As far as the now filed Ponteland Local Plan goes, they had no part in the creation of that Plan.

Coun Peter Cowey
Mayor of Ponteland

Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views but the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters for legal or other reasons. All letters submitted should include the writer's name and address.

October issue deadlines: The October issue will be delivered on October 1. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday September 14. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the October issue.

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£700 per couple. Additional children aged under 16 extra £200 if sharing.

New Year at the Bay Horse

A special three day package including: three nights' accommodation; afternoon tea on December 30; light supper with bottle of house wine; late New Year's Eve breakfast followed by local walk with afternoon picnic; New Year's Eve dinner and entertainment and glass of champagne at midnight; full Northumbrian breakfast on New Year's Day followed by local walk and picnic lunch; New Year's Day dinner; breakfast on January 2.

£700 per couple. Additional children aged under 16 extra £200 if sharing.

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What's on...

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 September 1.

Annual Duck Races

Sunday September 2 at Ponteland Park from 1.30pm to 4pm. First race 2.15pm. Fun for all the family with bouncy castle, fairground organ, children's games, refreshments and displays. Race tickets available from Mackley & Steven optometrists or any Rotarian. Proceeds to Rotary charities – local and international.

Wildlife Group Welcomes New Members

The first of the new season's meetings of the Ponteland Group of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust [NWT] takes place on

Tuesday September 4 at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall in the village. On that evening we are delighted to welcome Mike Pratt, the Chief Executive of the NWT based in Gosforth, who will give a short illustrated talk on the Living Landscapes Project. New members are very welcome to come along; tea, coffee and light refreshments are included in the nominal £2 entry fee, payable at the door. Monthly meetings of this friendly group are normally held on the first Tuesday of every month from September right through until April. We hope to see you at this and subsequent meetings.

Northumberland Fuchsia Society

Our next meeting is being held at St Matthew's Church Hall, West Road, Ponteland, from 7.30pm on Thursday September 6.

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 September 7, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see <http://www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html>

Ponteland Parish Flower Show

The 35th Annual Ponteland Parish Flower Show will be held in the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 8. There are more than 120 classes, including flowers, vegetables, fruit, cookery, handicrafts, wine, photography and children's. The show opens at 1pm, with the awards ceremony at 4pm. Entrance cost is £1 for adults, and children are free.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday September 10 is Peter Warburton and his subject 'Unsung Wartime Heroes'. 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.

Ponteland Photographic Society

The 2012-13 season opens on Monday September 10 at 7.30pm. We meet at 7.30pm every Monday evening through to April 15, 2013 in the large room at Merton Hall in Ponteland, with a short break over the Christmas/New Year holiday and again at Easter. Meetings usually last for two hours.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Our next meeting is at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 7.30pm on Tuesday September 18, where our demonstration is from Jayne Edmonds of Coventry – 'For the Beauty of the Earth'.

Ponteland Civic Society

The first meeting of the new season for Ponteland Civic Society is on Monday September 24 at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Marion Proctor, of Friends of the Laing, will speak on 'The History of the Laing Art Gallery'. Guests most welcome, for whom there is a small

charge. We have an extra meeting this year - on Monday October 29 when we have managed to invite Kate Sussams to talk to us on the very interesting 'Old Newcastle Project – Revitalising the Historic Heart of the City'. Do look out for details of this project in the press and regarding Heritage Open Days.

Memorial Hall fundraising Italian night

An Italian night will be held at Fratelli's restaurant on Monday October 1 to raise funds for the Memorial Hall renovation appeal. Tickets for a two course meal of either starter and main course or main course and dessert will cost £17.50. Further courses are available on the night at £4. Requests for tickets can be made direct to the hall office or on (01661) 822603 (messages can be left outside office opening hours). Donations in the form of raffle prizes would be most welcome.

Help for Heroes Concert: A Taste of Scotland

A concert is being held at Ponteland United Reformed Church on Tuesday October 16 to raise funds for Help For Heroes. Entertainment is provided by singer Stephen Quigg (formerly of The McCalmans) and The Donna Kimberley School of Highland Dancing. Tickets costing £10 including refreshments are available from Mackley & Steven, Main Street, Ponteland and Newcastle Building Society, Broadway, Darras Hall. Doors open 6.15pm for a 6.45pm start.

Ponteland's weekly market

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

Ponteland Badminton

Give Badminton a go at Ponteland Leisure Centre, choose a session from: Adults - Fridays 9.30am to 10.30am. All abilities/families and standards (no strings sessions) - Mondays 11am to 12noon and Tuesdays 4.30pm to 5.30pm. Juniors - Mondays 4pm to 5pm (ages up to 12) and Saturdays 10am to 12noon (ages 9 - 16). Enquiries: Phil Hall fill.hall@btinternet.com or 078100 84153.



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MP's charity walk raises £1,500

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman is on course to raise £1,500 for the Great North Air Ambulance appeal after completing a 260-mile Pennine Way charity walk.

The MP set off on August 1 from Edale in Derbyshire and walked the route through Yorkshire and parts of Durham and Cumbria, into Northumberland and finishing just over the border in Scotland two weeks later.

He has received hundreds of pounds through his constituency office and the fundraising website justgiving.

Mr Opperman said: "I am so pleased we have been able to raise all this money for such a well deserving cause. I would like to thank everyone who has offered me their support and every single penny will be going to support the fantastic work of the Great North Air Ambulance who do so much for others."



35th annual Ponteland Parish Flower Show: Saturday September 8

By Syd Cowan

The 35th Annual Ponteland Parish Flower Show will be held in the Memorial Hall next Saturday, September 8.

Fortunately the show does cover a number of classes that are not weather reliant. Most gardeners are having a very difficult time but we do hope that the weather will improve and some produce and flowers will be good enough to show.

There are more than 120 classes, including flowers, vegetables, fruit, cookery, handicrafts, wine, photography and children's.

The full show schedules are printed and are available from Ponteland Library and Post Office and also from Post Offices in Belsay, Dinnington, and Stannington and the Library in Heddon.

The show opens at 1pm, with the awards ceremony at 4pm. Entrance cost is £1 for adults, and children are free.



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Can you help Town Council plan the future development of Ponteland?

Town Councillors are seeking volunteers to work with them towards a public referendum on a long term planning blueprint for Ponteland.

A summary of the Draft Local Ponteland Plan and a map setting out some of the changes proposed in the document, drawn up by the Town Council, were included in the August issue of Pont News, along with an appeal for feedback.

Many months of hard work had gone into the creation of the 50-page Plan, which included some ideas from the Local Plan prepared by the former Castle Morpeth Borough Council. The idea was to outline various changes which could be beneficial to Ponteland in the long term, including

new schools, a bypass, Metro extension and new business parks.

But given the poor reception it received from the 100+ residents at the Memorial Hall consultation meeting held on August 14, the Town Council has decided to go back to the drawing board – the DLPP has not been submitted to any official body.

The next step is to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which will require lots of resident participation. This Plan would, if the DLPP had been accepted, have taken parts of that Plan plus statutory resident input, resulting in an independent inspector guiding, scrutinising and hopefully approving the plan.

The process will now start from a clean slate but guided by this initial consultation. The inspector approved NDP must be

submitted to the people of Ponteland in a referendum. The referendum results will be binding as to whether it is adopted or not.

The final document will support the County Council's Core Strategy (currently under consultation) in setting out the key policies and priorities when making decisions on the future development of the Ponteland area.

What is needed now are residents with an interest or expertise in planning who will volunteer to spend time with the Council to begin forming this new Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Anyone interested in taking part can contact Town Mayor Peter Cowey direct at peter.cowey@talktalk.net or by calling (01661) 823997.



ANNUAL DUCK RACES

This weekend sees one of the most popular events in the Ponteland calendar, with the Annual Duck Races.

They take place this Sunday, September 2 at Ponteland Park from 1.30pm to 4pm, with the first race at 2.15pm.

Ponteland Rotary Club, which organises the charity event, promises fun for all the family with attractions including a bouncy castle, fairground organ, children's games, refreshments and displays.

Race tickets are available from Mackley & Steven optometrists or any Rotarian. All proceeds go to Rotary charities – local and international.

GREEN LIGHT FOR HOMES DESPITE FLOOD FEARS

A set of new properties in Ponteland has been given the green light, despite flooding concerns.

Objections to the proposal for seven houses to replace the offices owned by construction group Galliford Try, off West Road, came from local residents, Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Civic Society, among others.

The opponents claimed there would be a number of negative consequences of the development, such as an increased flood risk, loss of employment, damage to wildlife and the potential loss of parking for users of the nearby scout hut, who are currently able to stay in the Galliford Try spaces during the evenings.

But Northumberland County Council's West Area Planning Committee approved the application, with seven members in favour and two against.

It was told by officers that all planning policies were met and there were no objections from consultees, such as the highways department and the Environment Agency. In its planning submission, Galliford Try said the proposed development is sustainable and will enable the business branch to relocate as it has outgrown its current premises.

SQUIRREL SAVIOUR SALLY COLLECTS AWARD FROM DUKE

A Ponteland woman who was nationally honoured for efforts to protect red squirrels at a local and regional level has picked up her award. Winners of the Red Squirrel Survival Trust's (RSST) Volunteer of the Year Awards were invited to Alnwick Castle to receive their certificates and plaques from His Grace the Duke of Northumberland.

The group included Sally Hardy of Ponteland and Jackie Foott from Sedburgh, who were joint winners in the Leading Light category for their contribution in setting up Northern Red Squirrels, which brings independent voluntary groups together across the North East and Cumbria.

Mrs Hardy is also the co-ordinator of Ponteland Red Squirrels, which works to maintain and increase the population of reds in the Ponteland and Darras Hall areas and raise awareness of the need to support them to prevent them being wiped out.

RSST Chairman Miles Barne said: "These awards are long overdue as we have all known for many years that without the passion, determination and sheer hard work of volunteers throughout the UK, over many years, our red squirrel conservation programme would be in a very different place today."



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Ponteland Methodists welcome a new Minister

By Rachel Wood, Senior Circuit Stewart Newcastle (West)

A special service is being held at Ponteland Methodist Church to welcome three new Ministers joining the Newcastle (West) Circuit.

Rev. Tim Thorpe takes up his duties as Superintendent Methodist Minister for the 11 churches in the Circuit, which covers Dilston Road to Scots Gap, at the beginning of September. His first preaching service will be at 10am on Sunday September 2. Tim and his wife Kay are moving to Ponteland from the Clitheroe Circuit.

We are also welcoming another two more new faces as well. They are seen here pictured with Tim - on the left Rev Nico Hilmy-Jones, who will be based at Heddon, and on the right, Rev. Juliet Wriglesworth, based at Westerhope.

There is a welcome service for all three in Ponteland Methodist Church on Tuesday September 4 at 7.30 p.m. Please come along and meet them.

Whilst Tim will be busiest in Ponteland he will also have pastoral charge of Lemington. He comes with a background in industry, having worked for British Rail for about 20 years.

He studied for the Methodist Ministry at the Hartley Victoria College in Manchester and has experience of both hospital and mental health chaplaincy. In fact, prior to being Superintendent of the Clitheroe Circuit he was the full time chaplain within the Nottingham NHS Trust for three years.

He began his circuit work in Redcar, Guisborough and Saltburn before spending nine years in Penrith, Cumbria.

Tim enjoys working ecumenically, leading Bible Study courses with weekend retreats. He says his ministry is very "people focused" with priorities being preaching, teaching and pastoral care. Tim and Kay have a daughter, Jessica, who works in the theatre and lives in Glasgow.

Rev. Juliet Wriglesworth (with pastoral charge for Westerhope, Denton Burn and Cowgate) comes to us from the North Lancashire Circuit after having been in the Runcorn Circuit. Juliet has a Methodist background from birth. She has been involved in social work before training for the Methodist Ministry at the Wesley Study Centre in Durham. She now has a chance to meet up again with the many friends she made there.

Rev Nico Hilmy-Jones (with pastoral charge to Blucher, Heddon, Milbourn and Scots Gap) comes to us fresh from training at the Wesley Study Centre and Cranmer Hall, Durham. She is a Scot, has travelled widely and has much outside experience and interest to base her ministry on.

We now have a full complement of Ministers again in our Circuit, after being one short in recent years. You will see the names of all three on our notice board with preaching appointments in September.

We welcome them now and wish them well in their new surroundings.

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Residents lose long-running battle against bar/bistro

Ponteland is to get a new bar/bistro after a Government planning inspector overturned a decision to reject the scheme by county planning chiefs.

The ruling follows an 18 month battle between applicant Jonathan Stokes and opponents including neighbouring homeowners, Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Civic Society, MP Guy Opperman and local county councillors Richard Dodd and Eileen Armstrong.

The plans to convert the former Co-op store and off-licence on Bell Villas into a 96-customer licensed restaurant generated almost 30 letters of objection and two petitions signed by 170 people.

They were twice rejected by Northumberland County Council's West Area Planning Committee, which concluded that the property had not been advertised widely enough for retail use and as a bar/bistro would result in an unacceptable loss of retail space in the town centre.

An initial appeal to the Planning Inspectorate also failed, but at the second attempt Inspector David Cullingford ruled that the bar and bistro will not unacceptably worsen existing parking problems in the area or significantly damage the living conditions and amenities of nearby residents.

PONTELAND FIREFIGHTER RAISES CASH FOR HELP FOR HEROES

Ponteland firefighter Brian Tinnion has raised more than £30,000 for charity through a series of energy-sapping challenges.



The ex-Royal Marine raised the cash by tackling the Virgin Money Cyclone, the Three Peaks Challenge, hiking to Everest's base camp and cycling from Lands End to John O'Groats.

He also completed a run with the Olympic Torch after his fundraising efforts saw him nominated to be part of the London 2012 relay.

Mr Tinnion, a firefighter with more than 25 years' experience with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, was the leading fundraiser in this year's Cyclone festival of cycling, which was held in July and saw more than 4,000 people take part.

He raised £5,000 for services charity Help 4 Heroes with his 104-mile cycle through the Northumberland countryside and has now been awarded prizes courtesy of technical sponsors Maddison.

The father-of-two, 51, said: "Taking part in the Virgin Money Cyclone is a tough challenge for cyclists but is a great opportunity. It gives riders the opportunity to get fit and raise many thousands of pounds for their chosen charity and in my case Help for Heroes."

He added the cash to his totals from the Three Peaks event, his Everest climb and his length-of-the-country cycle ride – all completed in 2010 – and other smaller fundraising events in the past year.

Mr Tinnion's wife Jeanette had nominated him to be part of the Olympic relay in recognition of his incredible achievements. He carried the torch through Bamburgh in north Northumberland as part of its journey round the UK.

WIN TWO CONCERT TICKETS WITH DINNER WORTH UP TO £90 AT THE NORTHUMBERLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL.

The Northumberland Music Festival – www.nmfestival.com being held at Doxford Hall, Eshott Hall and Guyzance Hall is a festival of opera, Gilbert and Sullivan, Classical and Traditional Music. Being held from November 9-18, some of the highlights include, Opera North Concerts, The Reg Vardy Brass Band Remembrance Sunday Concert, Northumbrian Pipes and Fiddle and Chethams School of Music.

There is music for all tastes and all concerts include either Gourmet Dinners, or concert suppers.

The prize is for two tickets pre concert dinner and a welcome drink on arrival to one of the following concerts :-

The Reg Vardy Brass Band - Concert Doxford Hall Sunday 11th November

Liquid Architecture - Eshott Hall Monday 12th November (Evening)

Chethams School of Music Concert - Guyzance Hall Tuesday 13th November

The Northumbrian Pipes and Fiddle Concert - Guyzance Hall Wednesday 14th November

The Northumbrian Ranters - Doxford Hall Thursday 15th November

Competition question: Which Opera House is performing in the Northumberland Music Festival?

Please send answers to:- The Northumberland Music Festival, Padgepool Place, Wooler, Northumberland NE71 6BL, or via email to info@nmfestival.com (marked Opera in the subject line). You must state your answer and clearly state which concert you would like to receive tickets for.

Terms and Conditions

Closing Date – Friday 28th September. The Prize Draw is open to anyone resident in the UK or Ireland aged 18 or over. It is not open to organisers of The Northumberland Music Festival or their families. The winner will be the first correct entry drawn from all entries, and will be informed immediately by the Festival Organisers by October 1st.

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Speeding vehicles and dangerous dogs top police complaints list

By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



In the period between July 12 and August 12 we had two crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These were:

- one burglary dwelling
- one burglary to a shed.

Enquiries are ongoing in respect to these offences.

One of our main complaints from residents in the Ponteland area is for speeding motor vehicles. As a result we regularly deploy our Interactive Speed sign around the main roads to advise people about their speed.

It's a lot easier than you think to go over the 30mph limit while driving around the local streets so keep it in mind and take care.

Another series of complaints we have received lately is for dangerous dogs. Remember if you own a dog then it's your responsibility to keep it under control and if your dog bites someone then it's your fault.

If you would like some crime prevention advice or have any neighbourhood issues you would like to discuss please contact PC 613 Davison or myself, PC 395 Anderson, on 101.

The next Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) meeting will be held at The Sure Start Centre, Thornhill Road, Ponteland, on Tuesday September 4 at 9.30am where you can raise community issues.

Local police surgeries will also be held on the following dates:

- CSO Beverley Brannighan on Saturday September 1 from 11.30am – 12.30pm at The Broadway Co-op

- CSO Jill Ruddick on Saturday September 8 from 9.30am - 10.30pm at Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison on Saturday September 15 from 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay village shop
- CSO Jill Ruddick on Friday September 28 from 11am – 12noon at Ponteland Library.

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

We also have engagement days at these dates and venues:

- Wednesday September 19 on Merton Way, Ponteland and Broadway, Darras Hall
- Wednesday September 26 in Matfen and Belsay.

Jealous lover who killed Ponteland mum gets life

A killer who strangled a Ponteland mum then set fire to her bed as she lay dead has been jailed for at least 18 years.

A court heard Stephen Streener knocked lover Jacqueline Grant senseless with punches and tightened a cord round her neck.

He then lit the fire at his house at Meadow Bank Drive, Choppington, Northumberland, and sent affectionate text messages to his dead lover and another from Mrs Grant's phone to her estranged husband saying their marriage was over - in a failed bid to cover his tracks.

Once arrested, Streener then tried to pin the blame for the killing on Mrs Grant's husband Bob and son Rob, a butcher.

The court heard Mr Grant Snr had been led to believe his wife was staying with a female friend after telling him she needed time to think and thought his wife would, in due course, come back to live with him.

But 48-year-old Mrs Grant had started a relationship with Streener, 49, and moved in with him, after they met at Brough Park where she worked. It is thought she must have backed out of a plan to leave her husband for good, prompting Streener's murderous attack last November.

He denied murder but was sentenced on August 15 shortly after a jury at Newcastle Crown Court returned a unanimous guilty verdict. Jailing Streener, Judge Paul Sloan QC said the killer had been "cowardly" in trying to blame Rob and Bob Grant for the murder, adding that they had acted with enormous dignity.

COUNTY LOOKS AT TRAFFIC MEASURES

Moves are underway to improve the build up of traffic congestion near three Ponteland schools. New yellow lines and No Waiting At Any Time restrictions are among the options being looked at by Northumberland County Council following a petition by residents in Linden Way which called for action.

They have been affected by cars going to and from Darras Hall First School in Broadway and Ponteland High and Middle Schools in Callerton Lane. A county council report earlier this year said that parking tended to start either side of the 'school keep clear' signs on the north side of Middle Drive up to an hour prior to opening and closing times.

Space is taken up prior to the bus stop and up to 100 metres beyond Linden Way. Vehicles then move into the street where there is no footpath on either side. All this creates congestion for moving traffic along Middle Drive by effectively making it a single-track road.

Funding for any works would come from Ponteland South member Peter Jackson's small schemes allowance. He said: "Before anything happens, there will be a period of consultation with residents to ensure that the final scheme fits with the wishes of the people who live in the area. This is definitely an issue which needs to be addressed. Emergency vehicles would struggle to get through the traffic at peak times."



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