

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Estate Committee denies
crisis as five resign

280-home Green Belt
scheme set for refusal

£15,000 court bill for
Northumbrian Water after
river polluted

Alpines show has nationwide appeal

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Bob and Rannveig Wallis win the George Forrest Memorial Medal for their Best in Show entry Cyclamen graecum.

Ponteland alpines show attracts exhibitors from across the UK

Alpine growers from across the UK put on an impressive display of 500 plants at an annual show held in Ponteland.

The North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society's Autumn Show, held at the Memorial Hall on Saturday October 12, attracted nearly 50 exhibitors and 300 visitors.

Local butcher Alan Newton was narrowly beaten as overall show winner by couple Bob and Rannveig Wallis from Carmarthen in South Wales, who were also awarded the Best in Show accolade for the second year running with their *Cyclamen graecum* (Greek cyclamen).

The NE group meets every month at St Mary's Church Hall and visitors are welcome - for details of their November meeting see the What's On guide on page 13.

*Cover shot: The *Gentiana sino-ornata* which won a 2nd place award for Keith and Rachel Lever from Aberconway Nursery. Photos by Trevor Walker.*



Asian plant Saxifraga fortunei Cherry Pie won first prize for Brian and Shelagh Smethurst from Bury.



First prize for Tim Lever from Aberconway Nursery for his Oxalis massoniana.



Estate Committee denies crisis as five resign

Darras Hall Estate Committee has rejected as “absolute rubbish” claims it is ‘disintegrating’ after a huge split saw nearly half the committee resign.

Five of the 11 committee members have walked out following a decision to allow a house builder to develop a six acre site on the corner of Runnymede Road and Fox Covert Lane.

The five-home development was granted planning permission subject to a Section 106 legal agreement by Northumberland County Council last year, but the Estate Committee initially refused to allow it under a planning policy preventing the sub division of existing plots.

In February Lugano Group Ltd threatened legal action against the Trustees and the Estate Committee saying it would seek damages of more than £19,000 a week, alleging bad faith on the part of the Plans Sub-Committee.

The Estate Committee sought legal advice from a senior barrister familiar with the Trust Deed and to date has incurred fees of £63,740. While rejecting the allegations of bad faith, members backed down in July and reversed the previous refusal to grant permission.

Work on the multi-million pound scheme on the site of the existing property Meadowcroft and adjacent land is now set to start next year. Newcastle-based Lugano said the houses were “high quality executive properties in very substantial plots in an extensively landscaped setting”.

But the dispute with Lugano has led to a major split in the Estate

Committee. The first resignation came in March, and a further three members resigned immediately after the meeting in July when the housing scheme was approved.

Chairman Michael Dainty wrote a newsletter sent to all 2,570 households on the estate last month saying that he retained the “unanimous support” of the other remaining committee members. But since then another has resigned, leaving just six of the 11 in position. There is no minimum required number of members set in the committee’s rules.

Mr Dainty’s letter acknowledged that there is a group of residents who believe a meeting should be formed to remove him as chairman or all the remaining committee members. He said such a meeting would cost thousands of pounds and have to be paid for by residents through the Annual Estate Rent Charge, currently set at £28. The alternative forum would be the AGM next March.

His letter continued: “The Committee intends to continue to do its best in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed to prevent insensitive development of the Estate and other intrusions which would not be restricted by Northumberland County Council.”

In a statement issued on behalf of the five who have resigned headed ‘Darras Hall Estate Committee Disintegrates’, former committee member Andrew Tucker said: “I resigned on a point of principle.

“Not only is there a lack of transparency from the Committee but there is also a lack of accountability to owners. In my opinion, the Committee has failed to act in the interests of the owners of the Darras Hall Estate and lost sight of its obligations to serve those owners.”

The joint statement goes on to say: “The legal costs to date are over £63,700 and are expected to be passed on and paid for by all the owners of properties on the Darras Hall Estate. This level of expenditure, the lack of consultation and detailed explanation of the make up of these costs, has led to widespread concern from residents.”

One concerned resident, Sheila Trafford, of Runnymede Road, said: “In my mind the Darras Hall Estate Committee has not served the interests of the owners well. They are there for a purpose and I do not think they have sought the views of the residents properly.

“Despite strong and public support for the refusal of the application the Estate Committee, in the face of threats by a developer, reversed its decision. By ignoring its own policy on preventing the subdivision of plots, the Darras Hall Estate Committee has potentially opened the flood gates to developers and completely undermined our confidence in it.”

Vice Chairman rejects claims

John Scott, vice chairman of the Estate Committee, rejected the claims of a lack of transparency or accountability and said the suggestion the committee was disintegrating was “absolute rubbish”: “We can function and are functioning and are doing what the Committee has done for the past 15 years I have been a member of it.”

He said ten letters had been received from estate owners in response to the newsletter sent out by Mr Dainty, with some in support and some against the actions taken. Mr Scott added that the legal costs would probably be met from reserves.

When asked if the Estate Committee had received the required 20 signatures from residents calling for a General Meeting of Owners where the chairman or other members could be removed, Mr Scott said “not yet but we believe we will get one”.



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PROJECTS REPORT

West Road Easy Access

Negotiations are still continuing with Northumberland County Council's Highways department to find a resolution to this issue. The planning application has been withdrawn whilst these discussions are ongoing.

Skate Park

The order for the works at the proposed skate park has been placed and it is anticipated that work would start on the installation on October 21st. It will be necessary to close the Callerton Lane Play Area whilst works are ongoing.

Public toilets

Councillors were informed of progress to date in relation to the public toilets at Thornhill Road. A meeting has been held with the County Council which has resulted in additional time being spent on cleaning the facilities including pressure washing. Discussions have also taken place with regard to the disabled facility and the Council has been advised that with one or two minor adjustments the toilet could be reopened.

GRANTS

A request for a grant from the Town Council was made by the Headteacher of Ponteland Middle School Dr Caroline Pryer for funding towards the cost of providing a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at the school for use by the schools, organisations and the community. Funding was committed from various sources including the Football Foundation and the four County Councillors for Ponteland. The Town Council approved a grant of £10,000 subject to budget considerations in 2014-15 making this possible.

WEBSITE

The Council had considered a report on various quotes received at the last meeting. It was agreed that the quote submitted by the preferred tenderer was accepted.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

A report was considered relating to revisions to the Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Group. The major change related to the change of the name and function from a Committee of the Council to a Steering Group. The number of members of the Group would be fixed at 16. In order to simplify administration, meetings are now not open to the public but the minutes would be available on the Neighbourhood Plan site. Details of the membership of the Group were also circulated to the Council. A further report was submitted which suggested allocating the funds which the Council had earmarked for the Conservation Area Characteristic appraisal to the Neighbourhood Plan group who were carrying out this work with the proviso that the funds must be utilised for this purpose. The reports were all approved.

WISH LIST 2014-15

A list of items submitted by Councillors to date was circulated. Any additional items were required by the end of October.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on September 16th and its recommendations were approved by the Council. Quotes had been sought for the base of one of the sets of swings at Callerton Lane to be improved and it was agreed to accept the lowest price. A meeting had been held with Northern Powergrid regarding the condition of the area in front of the substation at the top of Darras Road. Northern Powergrid had replaced the dilapidated doors on the substation with hardwood ones and had cut back some of the overhanging trees. This was much appreciated however the

land in front of the structure was in a poor condition and it was suggested that the area be cleared of weeds and gravel and tubs be placed in that area. It was estimated this would cost in the region of £300 and this was agreed.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on September 18th and discussed the layby at Thornhill Road. It seemed that the plans to install the five parking bays had been shelved due to the rising costs of moving utilities. An alternative proposal to remove the yellow lines at the lay by providing some four bays with signage allowing 20 minutes use was discussed and it was recommended that this be taken up with NCC Highways. A request had been made to NCC for a combined sign at the bottom of Thornhill Road. It was agreed that the Town Council offer to pay half of the cost of the new sign, which may expedite the installation. A proposal had been put forward by NCC for marking up of the electricity charging point parking bays as they were being used improperly by motorists. The suggested layout had been circulated to all Councillors and the proposal was agreed.

AIRPORT WORKING PARTY

This Working Party set up to look at the Airport Masterplan which was currently out for consultation met on September 18th and made various comments in relation to the Masterplan. The Council agreed to incorporate these comments into their response to the Airport by the deadline date of October 30th.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The Committee had met on September 23rd and had agreed various items such as the memorial seat

and tree policies. Members recommended a programme of replacement and refurbishment of some of the seats in the Cemetery, however the Council requested more information on this issue and it was agreed that delegated authority be given to the Clerk to replace the dilapidated seats only at this stage. The Committee had also discussed some fencing, scrubland clearance and hedge removal works for which quotes had been sought. It was agreed to accept the lowest price.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

It was reported that the Joint Area Committee with NCC and parish and town councils for the west area was to be held on October 15th at Hexham Auction Mart.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor had attended Ponteland Parish Flower Show on September 14th, which had been a great success. He will also be attending the Community Action Northumberland AGM, which is being held on November 5th.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The Council had considered a report relating to the Town Council offices regarding examination of various alternatives. The report had been taken in closed session due to commercial sensitivity. A decision was taken to remain in the current offices for the time being, although other alternatives would be examined as and when they became available. The Council took a decision not to proceed with the proposal to build offices at the back of the Memorial Hall due to the costs involved and the time involved in meeting loan repayments.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on October 10th.



Check your security

By PC Rob Anderson – Ponteland Community Beat Manager

In the period between September 16th and October 14th we have had 15 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- Three thefts from shops
- One theft from a motor vehicle
- One damage to a motor vehicle
- One making off without payment
- One robbery
- Two house burglaries
- One burglary other than dwelling
- One arson
- One theft by employee
- Two thefts
- One Public Order offence.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the crimes and an arrest was made for the public order offence.

Check your security – some points for you to think about:

We cannot stress enough how important it is to make sure you lock your doors and

all of your windows in unoccupied rooms when you go to bed for the evening and also remember to lock all windows and doors when you leave the house too. It may seem an unusual thing to say to those of you who already do this but there are still a few people who don't check. A thief would rather enter a house which is insecure than force entry and run the risk of alerting someone to their presence.

Leave a light on in the house when you're going to be back late or invest in a timer.

Ask your neighbours to keep a look out when you're away or a relative to check your house on a regular basis.

Lock your vehicles whether they are sitting on your drive or the street.

Be vigilant and take note of suspicious people and vehicles in your area.

Remember crime happens all day and not just at night.

Contact the police if you see anything suspicious.

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 Paul Cotterill 2nd November 9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison 9th November 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay village shop
- PC Rob Anderson 24th November 10am - 11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson 24th November 11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

We also have Engagement Days at these venues and dates:

- 7th November 10am – 12noon Merton Way/1pm – 3pm Broadway
- 27th November 1pm – 3pm Stamfordham/Belsay.

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Green Belt housing bid set for refusal

The battle to save Ponteland's Green Belt reaches a crucial stage over the next few weeks. The decision on plans for a 280-home development at Birney Hill will be swiftly followed by a Northumberland County Council consultation event where proposals to relax planning rules on the previously untouchable open fields surrounding the village will be revealed. Chris Jennings reports.



Planning chiefs are recommending refusal of the controversial planning application for 280 homes on Green Belt land at Birney Hill Farm.

Newcastle-based Lugano Developments said the £96m scheme for the 82 hectare site would create 900 jobs and include 70 "affordable" homes, a farm shop and café, and 650m2 of office floorspace, whilst 39.2 hectares of the site would be retained in agricultural use and managed as part of a Community Trust by a farm manager, with a further 17.9 hectares of publicly accessible open space.

For months the strength of opposition to the Lugano plans, and those for a further 500 homes at Clickemin Farm by Banks has been unmistakable, with dozens of 'Ponteland Residents Say No To Building On The Green Belt' signs adorning the main road into the village.

The county council's planning department has been deluged with representations, with 4,310 letters of objection and 487 letters of support received during the formal consultation process.

A site visit by planning officers and members of the West Area Planning Committee earlier this month saw 250 placard wielding campaigners, while a packed two-and-a-half hour public meeting held at the High School on October 9 attracted an estimated 550 residents.

Ponteland county councillor Peter Jackson, pictured above, told the meeting: "This development would open the floodgates to building on the Ponteland Green Belt and would see the beginning of the end of Ponteland and Darras Hall as we know it. We must stay united as community and not let that happen."

Objections also came from Ponteland Town Council, the Environment Agency and Newcastle Airport. Issues raised included the scheme contravening Green Belt policy and being unsustainable due to the risk of flooding and potential problems with existing infrastructure.

Recommending refusal, Principal Planning Officer Mark Ketley said in his report to the committee: "...the development of 280 houses

on currently open and undeveloped farmland would result in significant and demonstrable harm to the landscape of the countryside and openness of the Green Belt".

He added that the scheme "would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt", would be "inefficient use of valuable Green Belt land with a development that would average less than 3.5 dwellings per hectare", and would lead to "significant urbanisation of the site and demonstrable harm to the landscape character of the open countryside".

Other reasons given for recommending refusal included Lugano failing to adequately demonstrate that surface water from the development could be disposed of in a manner which would not increase flood risk elsewhere and not providing sufficient information on either the impact on the airport's instrument landing system or on future residents due to aircraft noise.

The planning committee meeting at Hexham Auction Mart on Wednesday October 30 starts at 6pm and is open to the public.

Not the only Green Belt threat

The plans by Lugano and Banks are not the only threat to Ponteland's Green Belt. Last year Newcastle City Council sparked 15,000 objections when it announced a 'Strategic Growth Area' named Callerton Park which would see 350 hectares of Green Belt land developed for housing.

A group was set up called Newcastle West Green Belt Protection Campaign to fight the One Core Strategy plans for 6,500 new homes in the area between the A69 and A696 near Callerton, Woolsington, Wallbottle and Throckley.

Northumberland Core Strategy Preferred Options consultation

A nine week consultation on the county council's new long term planning blueprint is launched the day after the Lugano application is decided, on Thursday October 31.

This includes proposals to delete areas of Ponteland's Green Belt to enable much needed new housing.

A report to the council's Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee which met at County Hall, Morpeth, just hours before the Lugano public meeting, said 24,000 new homes would need to be built across the county over the next two decades to accommodate a projected 10 per cent population increase, with 1,500 in the west.

It said: "In order to deliver the level of economic and housing development required to deliver the preferred strategy, Hexham, Prudhoe, and Ponteland will require land to be deleted from the Green Belt. Feedback on general locations will be sought through the consultation."

A consultation meeting is being held on Thursday November 21 at Ponteland Memorial Hall. It will include a small exhibition, with planning officers present, from 3pm to 6pm followed by a discussion session between 6.30pm and 8.30pm.

The council said it will be publishing a comprehensive response to all comments made during both Preferred Options consultations in spring 2014. Residents can contact the authority with any questions about the consultation arrangements or the Core Strategy planning process at PlanningStrategy@northumberland.gov.uk or on 0845 600 6400.



Northumberland County Council want to delete swathes of greenbelt land in and around Ponteland and Darras Hall, removing valuable assets forever.

This is not a done deal, but you need to make your voices heard NOW!

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INCREASED FLOODING

The second round of consultation is already underway, either act now or lose Ponteland as we know it.

Email planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk so you can register for the Ponteland Public Consultation at the memorial hall on 21 November.

Keep up to date with the campaign at www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk



Photo: Anil Gulati, Head Chef

From Delhi to Darras

Dinesh and Anil recreate authentic taste of India

He launched the famous Tyneside Punjabi restaurant Sachins three decades ago and now Dinesh Rawlley has returned to open a high class Darras Hall eatery which promises an authentic taste of India.



Top: Galouti Kebab. Bottom: Murgh Malai Tikka

As soon as you walk through the bespoke wooden entrance door the emphasis on quality is unmistakable.

In Hindi the word Haveli means a private mansion, usually with historical and architectural significance. With in excess of £500,000 invested, this unique establishment certainly lives up to its impressive name.

From the limestone flooring to the soft lighting, the comfortable colour co-ordinated furnishings to the stunning ceilings, the upmarket surroundings are designed to give diners an impression of understated sophistication.

Dinesh describes Haveli as 'a restaurant which serves Indian food rather than an Indian restaurant' – something which is reflected in the subtle but stylish decor.

In addition to its 85 covers, there is also a separate dining room which may be reserved for guests for private dining and meetings alike. Guests will be served by a dedicated waiter and the bar can be tailored to their requirements.

Dinesh, originally from Punjab, is a qualified engineer who ran his own shipping company before pursuing his passion for cooking Indian food. He learnt his craft as a chef working in the renowned London restaurant the Kyber when he came up with the concept for Sachins (Punjabi for 'the truth') back in 1983, selling the thriving business on Newcastle's quayside nearly two decades later in 2000 to spend more quality time with his family.

He said: "We are introducing a unique culinary experience to the region - casual fine dining in a comfortable setting which is accessible by all. We have a select menu of

authentic Indian dishes which we will soon be augmenting with specials. At Haveli, we are elevating Indian dining to a higher level."

With his background in engineering, Dinesh has exacting standards and clearly pays very close attention to every detail.

While Dinesh leads front of house operations, highly experienced chef Anil Gulati runs the kitchen. Anil trained with the famous Oberoi Group which also owns some of the most luxurious hotels in the world. It should therefore come as no surprise that Oberoi is a power house of culinary excellence in India. Anil later joined the Radisson in New Delhi as a senior chef having also worked in the Middle East, Russia, Eastern Europe and London.

Anil said: "Most of our dishes are from the golden triangle of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Everything is created using traditional methods of cooking with our own freshly ground spices and locally sourced meat and vegetables."

They include the Galouti Kebab, which emanates from the city of Lucknow which is in the northern Indian state Uttar Pradesh. The Galouti Kebab is said to have been originally prepared for an ageing Nawab (Indian Royalty) who had lost all of his teeth, hence the kebab was designed to be exceptionally tender and melt in the mouth.

The Rajasthani Laal Maas is a traditional dish enjoyed by the bedouins of Rajasthan, normally made with game meat but served here with lamb, coriander, chilli and paprika.

Other distinctive dishes include the Murgh Makhani which originated in Delhi. Its ingredients include chicken, tomato and fenugreek. Anil said that he combines black

peppercorns, shallots and tomatoes with 'the biggest fresh prawns we can get' to create the Jhinga Kalimirch.

A wide range of vegetarian options include Matthar Mushroom, Baingan Bharta, Punjabi Chole and Dal Makhani, with side dishes of Goat Cheese Kulcha, Laccha Paratha and Truffle Nan among the offerings.

While the recipes and techniques are from India, the team behind the design and build of Haveli is all very much locally based with architect Amrit Naru, graphic designer Peter Mallon, luxury house builder Shaun Ramsey and Sunil Mehra of the Zara Group all hailing from Darras Hall. Haveli is an investment in Ponteland as a community and one which has so far created ten jobs - five in the kitchen and five front of house.

Although Haveli's official launch is not until November, Dinesh's reputation for excellence has preceded him and word has spread quickly. The venue's Facebook page already has hundreds of followers and the phone has been ringing off the hook.

Given the quality of dining experience on offer, costs are surprisingly affordable for most pockets. Starters begin at £5 and mains start at just £11. Prospective diners are advised to book early to avoid disappointment.

Opening times
Monday to Saturday 6pm to 11pm

To reserve a table call
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www.haveli.net

Your letters

The Editor
Dont News & Views

A call to action for Green Belt campaigners in this month's letters...

Ponteland is united against Green Belt development

I am inspired to write to you in praise of the passionate people of Ponteland, Darras Hall and the surrounding residential area.

The recent public meeting at the High School relating to the most current attack on our Green Belt required an urgent leaflet drop to ensure that residents were fully informed. A call went out for volunteers to assist. How that call was answered!

We were humbled by the offers of assistance. Residents were just so pleased to take an active role in protecting this unique village. We had family outings with parents mobilising their kids for the cause, we had the active retired - you name it they came.

I have lived in Ponteland for over 20 years. Never have I seen the village so united in a common cause. This was no case of NIMBY motivation. Many residents who assisted have no threat of a building site at the end of their garden. This was about protecting the future of Ponteland - protection of the Green Belt. To all those who helped and who made offers to help we sincerely thank you.

Unfortunately, all too soon, that help will be needed once again. The real threat to the Green Belt has now emerged – in the form of the Northumberland County Council preferred strategy, which is again in its consultation stage.

Call me cynical but the preferred strategy is uncannily similar to the plans of a certain developer in waiting. The worst thing for Ponteland is the remotest acceptance that this represents a done deal. It is a consultation document.

Ponteland truly needs to be united now more than ever. We need to show Northumberland County Council that we will not give up on the Green Belt, that they will have to rethink a new preferred strategy – a strategy that does not have such a huge impact on the residents of Ponteland.

Tony Noble

Cheviot View, Ponteland

Sad to see newsagent go but happy to see charity shops arrive

In reply to Ian C Brown's comments on the local shop closure.

Yes, I do agree it is sad to see. However, these shops would not close down if they were doing well, it's a business and you need to be with the times to succeed.

Also, with regard to charity shops, have you ever visited the one in Pont? It's fantastic; great bargains to be had there. I welcome more charity shops.

Tony Marcella

Milbourne

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 and not exceed 150 words.

December issue deadlines: The December issue will be delivered on Friday November 29. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday November 15. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the December issue.

Thank you for our monthly coach trips

I write with regard to the very enjoyable coach trips we have had this past year.

They originate from an idea of Ann McDougal and her grandson John (our driver). They do all of the organising.

We, the regular users of Merton Hall coffee mornings, wish to thank them both for the trouble they take on our behalf - Elsie, Joan, Margaret, Marg and myself.

Miss M Hopkinson

Tithe Cottages, Glebe Close, Ponteland

Why drive as fast as emergency vehicles?

Can someone please explain to me why, when travelling at highly excessive speeds along Western Way on Darras Hall, police cars and ambulances emit a loud warning siren noise whilst the countless amount of other vehicles travelling at similar speeds do not.

J Malcolm Thompson

Western Way, Ponteland

Councillor's thanks to departing colleague

It goes without saying that at over 6ft tall Coun Robert Punton certainly took our Town Council to new heights!

Like many on the council and in the wider community I was very sad to hear of Coun Punton's decision to resign his post on the council after 18 months' loyal and extensive service to the residents of West Ward, with notable accomplishments as a member of the planning, cemetery and environment committees.

Rob originally encouraged me to stand myself for the Town Council, has been an incredible source of counsel and friendship ever since and is often seen as the pacifying force on the council at large.

A deeply thoughtful and kind gentleman, thank you for all that you have done and will no doubt continue to do for our community Rob. I wish you, your beautiful wife Silvia and son David every success in all that you do and know that you and your family will always put Ponteland first!

Coun Adam Shanley

*Linden Way,
Ponteland*

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 November 2nd.

All Souls' Service at St Mary's Church

Sunday November 3rd at 3pm - All Souls' service at St Mary's Church, Ponteland. An opportunity to remember those who have died, to light a candle, and find strength and peace as we meet together.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

Ponteland Wildlife Group welcomes you to its next meeting on Tuesday November 5th at St Mary's Church Hall (7.30pm start) when Steven Comber will talk about 'Flexigraze - how the Northumberland Wildlife Trust uses animals to improve the environment'. The £2 admission fee includes refreshments and everyone is welcome. The following meeting on December 3rd features George Proud with a talk on 'Wildflowers - Mythology, Folklore and Photography' - same place, same time.

U3A

Our monthly speaker on Wednesday November 6th is Dr Peter Edwards whose subject is 'Astronomy, a beginners guide'. We meet at 2pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Visitors are welcome. No charge. Interested in joining U3A activities? Visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring (01661) 822225.

Ponteland URC Christmas Fayre

Our annual Christmas Fayre is being held on Saturday November 9th at

Ponteland United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall. Doors open at 10.30am and admission is free. All the usual attractions, including: Bric-a-Brac · Raffle · Gifts · Jewellery · Christmas Cards · Cake stall · Provision/Perfumeries · Café · Tuck Shop · Bottle Tombola · Floral Decorations · Books and CDs · Games to play · Toiletries · Games · Toys. Music from Sandy and Jim. Do join us for an enjoyable family day out. Contributions to all stalls welcomed. Contact: Jane Dunn on (01661) 825688 or F. Milligan on (01661) 823489.

Railway Films at St Mary's Church Hall

Saturday November 9th - Railway Films on St Mary's Church Hall at 3pm and 7.30pm. We will have some films of Railways at War and, as the donations are going to the Children's Society, we will also have a couple of films looking at aspects of childhood.

Remembrance Day Service and Parade: Sunday November 10th

An Act of Remembrance will be held at the Memorial Hall, Ponteland, on Sunday November 10th starting at 10.55am and led by Ponteland Clergy. Two minutes' silence will be observed at 11am at the war memorial, after which wreaths will be laid by Civic Leaders, representatives of HM Forces and the Royal British Legion. A parade to the Memorial Hall will leave the Leisure Centre at 10.45am, led by 733 Squadron Air Training Corps. The main service at St Mary's Ponteland starts at 9.30am and the service at Holy Saviour, Milbourne, at 10.45am. At 6.30pm a service of words and music at St Mary's will tell the story of the Shetland Bus, the fishing boats who braved the North Sea to supply the people of Norway during the Second World War.

The Northumbrian Ranters

This group of talented musicians formed five years ago including fiddle, cello, harps, guitars and keyboards is playing at the Britannia Hotel by Newcastle Airport, at 7pm on Sunday November 10th, joined by The Ceilidh Band. Tickets costing £7 are available from Mackley & Steven, Main Street, Ponteland. Doors open at 6pm.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday November 11th is Richard Cansdale whose talk is entitled 'The Accidental Inventor'. 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 donaldfloyd@sky.com or on (01661) 872661.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our guest speaker on Monday November 11th will be Ray Stephenson, whose talk will be on Bulgarian Alpine Plants. 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. Contact Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or by calling (0191) 413 2574.

Darras Hall W.I.

Visitors are most welcome to come along to the next meeting of Darras Hall W.I. on Thursday November 14th at 2pm in the URC Church Hall, Broadway. We are being entertained by Mr Phil Curtis' talk on 'Life in the 1960's' and the competition will be for a song from the 60s, so 'Walk on By' and remember 'What a Wonderful World' it used to be.

Children's Society coffee morning

A coffee morning in aid of the Children's Society is being held

at 10am on Saturday November 16th in St Mary's Church Hall, Ponteland.

NCC Core Strategy consultation event

Northumberland County Council is holding a consultation event on its Local Plan Core Strategy on Thursday 21st November at Ponteland Memorial Hall. The drop-in event includes a small exhibition, with planning officers present, from 3pm to 6pm followed by a discussion session between 6.30pm and 8.30pm. The strategy will include proposals for the deletion of parts of the Green Belt surrounding Ponteland. See article on page 8.

Ponteland Civic Society

The speaker at our meeting on Monday November 25th at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall is Jules Brown, who will speak about Newminster Abbey (located near Morpeth). Founded in 1138 as a daughter church to Fountains Abbey but a ruin since the Reformation, it is on the English Heritage At Risk Register. Visitors most welcome, for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

Early Advent service – St Mary's Church

On Sunday December 1st at 6.30pm an Advent sequence of words and music sung by the choir will be beautiful service to start our preparations for Christmas.

Merton Hall

Our next trips are to Heighley Gate, Morpeth, on November 19th and to Gilsland Hotel on December 5th. Contact Merton Hall on (01661) 872917 for further details. You are invited to Merton Hall for Brunch And Bingo every second Thursday from 12noon until 3pm. Don't forget, Merton Hall is a great place to meet up with friends, read the papers and have a cuppa for 30p and the second cup is free (Monday to Saturday mornings). We also need a CD player and if anyone has one they could donate please ring (01661) 821488.

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St Mary's Church Hall
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www.jennysyoga-bowen.co.uk**

Jenny Channon





QUESTIONNAIRE

This is an ideal opportunity for you and your family to influence the outcome of your own neighbourhood plan whilst also responding to some key, and potentially controversial, issues raised in NCC's draft Core Strategy. The Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan, currently being developed by a team of local residents working on behalf of the Town Council, will, if approved in a referendum, enable the local community to decide its own vision for Ponteland going forward and, most importantly, to determine future local planning policy in a way that currently is not permitted. However, legislation dictates that those policies will ultimately need to align with the broader Core Strategy for growth and development in Northumberland drawn up in draft form by the County Council and currently at consultation stage.

HOUSING

YES UNSURE NO

- 1 The draft Core Strategy recently published by Northumberland County Council proposes that Ponteland should contribute an additional 850 new houses over the next 20 years.**
- 1.1** Do you support that proposal? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 1.2** Would you support that proposal if it did not require the loss of green belt? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 2 There is a chronic shortfall of affordable housing and housing for the over 60s both nationally and locally. With this in mind would you agree with the following:-**
- 2.1** More affordable housing should be provided in Ponteland? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 2.2** Affordable housing should comprise a mix of rental and ownership? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 2.3** There should be more provision of housing suitable for retirees? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 2.4** There should be more residential style care homes in Ponteland? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 2.5** Housing mix and tenure should be left to market forces? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 3** Do you agree that new housing should preferably be on 'brown field' sites only i.e. previously developed land? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 4 If Green Belt land has to be released for housing should this be:-**
- 4.1** Close to the village centre with pedestrian and cycle links? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 4.2** Away from the village centre in smaller developments with separate identities? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 4.3** Left to market forces to bring sites forward? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO

TRANSPORTATION & HIGHWAYS

- 5 The provision of a northern by-pass to Ponteland would help to reduce traffic congestion in the village centre, allow more of the village centre to be pedestrianised and potentially create small peripheral sites suitable for play areas, car parking, employment and housing use.**
- 5.1** Would you support that proposal in principle if a suitable route could be agreed? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 5.2** Do you agree that developers who would add to traffic volumes in Ponteland should contribute towards the cost of a future by-pass as a condition of their planning approval? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 6** Do you consider the traffic congestion in the vicinity of school entrances to be dangerous as well as inconvenient? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 7** Do you think that there should be more cycle lanes in and around Ponteland? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 8** Do you think that in Ponteland cycling is a safe alternative to motorised transport? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 9** Are car parking facilities in Ponteland adequate? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 10** Do you think that it would be a good idea to bring the Metro into Ponteland? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO

DRAINAGE & FLOODING

YES UNSURE NO

- 11 Since Ponteland Village Centre was last flooded, defence measures have been implemented, but there are still weak points that may be overtopped in severe conditions (1 in 100 year floods) and which require emergency works to protect property.**
- 11.1** Is this position acceptable? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 11.2** Should funding be made available to provide improved defences? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 11.3** Would you like to see a Community Agreement set up which makes arrangements for local groups, (e.g. flood action groups or flood wardens) to take initial actions and provide advice following a flood warning being issued? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 12 New developments are required to control the rate of water draining into watercourses and sewers by measures known as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). In most cases in Ponteland these will require storm water to be stored at locations from where it can be discharged at a controlled rate into watercourses.**
- 12.1** Do you consider SuDS to provide an appropriate means of reducing the risk of flooding from new developments? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 12.2** Do you agree that open channels and storage ponds should be located away from areas of family housing and made inaccessible to young children? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 13 Many properties have watercourses running through or adjacent to gardens. Advice on responsibilities for watercourse maintenance and flooding is set out in the following leaflets:-**
- Living on the Edge – Environment Agency*
- Roles and Responsibilities for Flooding – Northumberland County Council*
- 13.1** Are you aware of these documents? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 13.2** Do these documents provide you with the information you need? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO

BUSINESS, RETAIL & EMPLOYMENT

- 14** Do you shop in Ponteland for your primary groceries and fresh produce? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 15** Would you prefer to shop in Ponteland if it catered for more of your needs? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 16** Does the centre of Ponteland need a greater variety of shops? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 17** Does the condition of the buildings discourage you from shopping in Ponteland? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 18** Are there enough cafes, bars and restaurants in Ponteland? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 19** Would you prefer to work in Ponteland if you could? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 20** Do you think that a modern business hub in or near to the centre would encourage more businesses to settle and stay in Ponteland? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 21** Do you think that construction of a by-pass and the pedestrianisation of the village centre would create new business opportunities? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 22** Do you agree that Ponteland needs to retain an industrial estate? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 23** Should the industrial estate eventually be relocated to a peripheral location to free up land near the village centre for other uses? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO

CONSERVATION & HERITAGE

- 24** Do you think protection should be extended to include the trees and green spaces on the approach roads to Ponteland and on other council owned land? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 25** Do you think that there should be a programme to reduce the amount of commercial and highway signs in the Conservation Area? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 26** Should the Conservation Area be reviewed and extended to include adjacent areas of particular interest and merit? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO

EDUCATION, YOUTH & LEISURE

- 27** Are the pre-school and after-school provisions adequate at our local schools? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 28** Should more community use be made of school buildings and playing fields? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 29** Are the adult learning facilities in Ponteland satisfactory? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 30** Are there enough activities available locally for young people? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 31** Are there enough recreation areas available in Ponteland for young people? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO
- 32** Are there sufficient leisure facilities available in Ponteland for adults? ☐ YES ☐ UNSURE ☐ NO

HEALTH & THE ELDERLY

	YES	UNSURE	NO
33 Health:-			
33.1 Is the location of the Medical Centre satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.2 Do you have difficulty safely accessing the Medical Centre?			
(a) By Car	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) By Public Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) On Foot	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
33.3 Do you consider that the optician services available locally are satisfactory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.4 Do you have access to an NHS dentist in Ponteland?	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
33.5 If not, would you prefer to have access to an NHS dentist in Ponteland?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34 The Elderly:-			
34.1 Are you aware of the activities available for older people in Ponteland?	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
34.2 If you are over 60 do you use any of these activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
34.3 Would you wish to stay in Ponteland as you get older?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.4 Do you think there is sufficient suitable housing available to enable you to do this?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.5 Do you use the facilities in the village centre?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.6 Can you easily access these?			
(a) By Car	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
(b) By Public Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) On Foot	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

35 Should there be restrictions on the type of front boundaries allowed on new developments in order to maintain/enhance wildlife corridors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 Should Tree Preservation Orders be extended, where possible, to all properties in Ponteland in order to maintain/enhance wildlife habitats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ABOUT YOU

Your Postcode

Your Sex M ☐ F ☐

Your Age <18 ☐ 18-30 ☐ 31-50 ☐ 50+ ☐

Years Lived in Ponteland Yrs

WHAT TO DO NOW!

Please place your completed questionnaire in a sealed envelope marked 'PONTELAND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP' in one of our collection boxes at one of the 'drop off' points listed below by the closing date of Friday 6th December 2013:-

- Ponteland Town Council Office, Meadowfield Court
- Ponteland Care Centre, Meadowfield – the Community Services reception (Tue to Fri)
- Darras Hall Clinic, Broadway (Mon to Fri)
- Sainsbury's Supermarket, Ponteland – Main exit till
- Waitrose Supermarket, Ponteland – Customer service counter

Alternatively you can post your completed questionnaire to:
Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Group, Ponteland Town Council, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Ponteland, Northumberland, NE20 9SD

Responses are welcome from all members of your family. You can download further copies of this questionnaire from our website at www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk or simply photocopy this pull-out.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING PART IN OUR COMMUNITY CONSULTATION.
YOUR VIEWS DO MATTER AND THEY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



Ponteland Community High School Report

In a new feature for Pont News, budding journalists from the high school will provide a monthly report on success stories both inside and outside of the classroom.



Horse of the Year Show winner Charlotte Ash



Vicki Devlin at Aske Horse Trials in North Yorkshire in May

Charlotte and Vicki galloping their way to success

By Jess Rea

Two Ponteland students are galloping their way to success with their performances at international equestrian events.

Showjumper Charlotte Ash, 14, has just beaten 29 competitors to secure the Squibb Demolition Pony Foxhunter title at the Horse of the Year Show at Birmingham's NEC, while eventer Vicki Devlin, 17, was in the North East U18 team which claimed third place at Weston Park International Horse Trials, Staffordshire.

Charlotte bettered six rivals in the jump off to claim her latest sash on her pony Augnashammer, the duo having earlier been in the four man England 148cm team which won gold at the Welsh Home Pony International in Chepstow in May.

A superb year has also seen her win the National Newcomer Masters Final in Stafford

and finish second in the National Foxhunter Masters Final on her pony Killack King, who she described as "such a character".

Meanwhile Vicki is also making her presence known throughout the British Eventing scene alongside her mount Right Rebel.

Earlier this month she joined a 10 strong Open Novice squad, together with a BE100 team, as the region presented their finest young eventers for the final championship event at Weston Park.

On the run up to the event Vicki, from Ponteland, handled the pressure with her usual gritty style: "I am feeling overwhelmed with excitement but also very nervous as I want to give my best performance of the year. Most of all I don't want to let the team down."

And of course she did not disappoint, scoring a respectable 57.4 in the dressage phase of the competition followed by an impressive

clear round of cross country, crucially inside the optimum time, and an unlucky eight faults in show jumping. This earned her 26th place on the day, joining the team in 3rd.

This impressive achievement only builds upon Victoria's many successes including 2nd at the ONu18 qualifiers at Floors Castle Horse Trials and 12th at her first CIC1* at Hopetoun International Horse Trails, where she beat 70 competitors to the position.

Despite this Vicki remains focused and grounded with her plans for the future before her, adding: "My goals are just to keep Spike (Right Rebel) fit and healthy."

The dedication and passion needed to maintain such a high standard and success are commendable. Alongside her horse Right Rebel she is set to soar through the levels of British Eventing. The pair are stars of the future!



Jolie with her Beatles inspired winning entry

Winning artist Jolie collects award from Gok Wan

A trip on the London Eye and meeting TV celebrity Gok Wan at a swanky awards ceremony were the rewards for a lucky Year 11 student who won a national art competition.

Jolie Ince was one of 12 national winners of the NASWUT Art and Minds Competition 2013, which celebrates cultural diversity in education.

She was joined by her parents and the school's Raising Achievement Leader in Art Mrs Murphy at the ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, where guest judge Gok Wan presented the prizes.

Jolie was the only winner from the North East, also winning £350 for the school and £50 in Amazon vouchers for herself.

Delighted headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "Jolie is a very talented young lady and we are all very proud of what she has achieved."

Do you need help at home this winter?



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Get your tickets online for Sleeping Beauty



It's almost panto time in Ponteland.
Oh yes it is!

Members of Ponteland Repertory Society have been working hard on their seasonal show and in just a few weeks they will be presenting the magical fairytale Sleeping Beauty.

Hannah Elliot, who delighted audiences last winter with her touching performance as Wendy in Peter Pan, is returning to the Ponteland stage as the beautiful Princess Aurora, with her handsome prince played by society newcomer Adam Thompson.

The show has been specially written for The Rep by Simon Sladen, a panto expert and former student of the show's director Carole Davies.

Simon is widely acknowledged as one of the UK's leading lights on British Pantomime. As the British Theatre Guide's Panto Editor he reviews 25 pantomimes each season, writes for various journals and has provided expert guidance for top theatres and television amongst other things.

Rep Chairman Ted Henderson said theatre-goers are able to buy tickets for the show online and by telephone this year for the first time: "We appreciate that not everyone has been able to get into Ponteland to buy their tickets in the past, but this year tickets can be purchased 24 hours a day online through our website.



Pictured (l-r) are: JoJo Jangles - Jonny Woollett; Fairy Flutter - Lucy Walton; Prince Percy - Adam Thompson; Princess Aurora - Hannah Elliot; King Crumpet - Jason Long; Herbert the Herald - Bradley Craig.

We've also arranged a telephone ticket service. We hope these new facilities make it easy for people to book their seats."

The show runs Tuesday 26th to Saturday 30th November at the Memorial Hall with evening performances at 7pm and a Saturday matinee at 2pm. Tickets cost just £8 adult and £6 for a child. They can be purchased at www.pontelandrep.co.uk and can also be booked by telephone on 0844 8700887 (5p min + £1.50 booking fee).

Ponteland Repertory Society
presents a new pantomime by
Simon Sladen

Sleeping Beauty

Tuesday 26th - Saturday 30th
November 2013

Evenings at 7pm plus Saturday matinee at 2pm
The Memorial Hall, Darras Road, Ponteland

Tickets: Adults £8 Children £6
Booking Office Ticket Only Service 0844 8700 887
(5p minute plus £1.50 booking fee)
FREE Online booking at

www.pontelandrep.co.uk



Ponteland In Bloom volunteers with the Best Town gold award

GET THE SMILE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED...

...in time for next summer



BEFORE



DURING



AFTER

Blooming marvellous!

By Muriel Sobo

A superb effort by the Town Council and various local organisations and volunteers has seen Ponteland secure its best ever result at the Northumbria In Bloom awards.

The village collected four gold awards and a silver gilt at a ceremony at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland presented by local TV celebrity John Grundy and hosted by BBC Radio Newcastle's Garden Mania presenter Marian Foster, who hails from Ponteland.

The awards received were:

- Best Town – Gold
- Grounds of care homes – Gold (Athol House)
- Sports grounds – Gold (Ponteland Bowls and Tennis Clubs)
- Allotment associations – Gold (Prestwick Allotments)
- Public houses and hotels – Silver Gilt (The Diamond Inn)

Meanwhile Mary Short was one of five shortlisted in the 'Outstanding contributions to Northumbria in bloom by private individuals' category for her work at Athol House.

A great effort by all involved - workers, volunteers and funders.



Athol House resident Mary Short relaxes in the garden with volunteer Ron Dunn



Colourful displays on Main Street



David Cowings, Alison Storey and David Kirk from Ponteland Bowling Club



David and Carole Butler at their Prestwick allotment

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

Cyclist Sophie goes from nought to medals in six months

A Ponteland schoolgirl who only started racing six months ago is topping the region's cycling charts with her medal winning rides.

Sophie Enever, 13, won a silver medal at the North East Cycling Championships in Middlesbrough last month and is already in the top 30 of the national British cycling points table.

Proud dad Gary, 55, who trains with her at Tyneside Vagabonds Cycle Club at Thornyford Farm, Kirkley, said: "Sophie got her first proper road bike last year and only started racing in April. During the summer she has been racing once or twice a week, training twice a week and road riding with me and with the Vagabonds.

"She rode the 63-mile Virgin Money Cyclone in 4 hours 20 minutes (she would have been quicker, but I slowed her down!) Sophie has also ridden at Dishforth Airfield, Scarborough, Preston, Lancaster and Blackpool this year, as well as the local races in Middlesbrough, Hetton and Washington, and the Leazes Park Criteriums."

So could the Ponteland High School student be the next Lizzie Armitstead?

Gary, of Ponteland, said: "She is about to start cyclocross racing to keep fit during the winter. As far as ambitions, it is a bit too early to say, although she definitely wants to keep cycling and see where she ends up. She has been recommended by her local coaches for special training, and has ridden three times with the



Sophie is pictured racing in Leazes Park in June.

British Cycling Olympic Talent Development coaches at Regional Schools of Racing in Lancaster and York."

Children interested in training with British Cycling qualified Vagabonds coaches can simply turn up at Thornyford Farm, Kirkley, on Saturday mornings from 9am until 10.30am with their bikes and helmets and have a go. For more information visit www.tynevags.org.uk



Ponteland Golf Club

"One of Northumberland's finest! Excellent catering & bar facilities." Golf North East, 2008

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

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



POLICE HUNT MEDBURN STABLE THIEVES

Around £1,200 worth of equine equipment has been stolen from stables near Ponteland.

Police believe thieves targeted the secluded block in Medburn overnight on Sunday October 13, stealing over 20 items including horse rugs, coats, tack and feed.

FROM THE LITTLE SHOP TO OUR HOUSE

Rehearsals are now well underway for this academic year's Ponteland Community High School production of 'Our House'.

Set to the music of Madness, it follows the story of Joe Casey who on his 16th birthday makes a decision which alters the course of his life. The play splits in two as the audience see different versions of Joe's life.

If you want to find out more, put the dates in your diary: 4th-7th March 2014, Ponteland Memorial Hall.



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Retirement and Entrepreneurial Intentions



Newcastle University is undertaking research that aims to examine how work life experiences influence the formation of entrepreneurial motivations and to investigate how these affect retirees' decisions to create new ventures.

If you are aged 60 or over, retired from employment and receiving a pension please spare a few minutes to complete our survey (it will only take 10-15 minutes), by visiting the address:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ponteland2013>

Northumbrian Water gets £15,000 bill after Ponteland pollution incident

Northumbrian Water has been landed with a court bill of nearly £15,000 for causing sewage pollution to a stretch of the Ouse Burn in Ponteland.

Newcastle Magistrates heard a member of the public contacted the Environment Agency through its incident hotline to report that there was raw sewage in the Ouse Burn at Callerton on March 13 last year.

Environment Agency officers visited the burn the following morning and located the source of pollution 200 metres downstream of Armstrong Street, Callerton.

The raw sewage discharge was from a combined sewer outfall with a flap valve next to Pipe Bridge over the Ouse Burn, part of the Northumbrian Water Ltd sewer network. Two hundred metres downstream, officers found grey fungus across the whole bed of the Ouse Burn. Upstream of the discharge, the water was clean and clear.

The environment officers contacted Northumbrian Water Ltd and the firm's staff arrived within an hour and swiftly found and cleared the blockage in the pipe that caused the sewage to leak. Formal samples of the discharge were taken which showed dissolved oxygen readings low enough to cause a significant negative impact on the ecology of the Ouse Burn.

The day after the discharge was found, an Environment Agency officer went back to the scene to assess the impact on the watercourse and found a thick covering of sewage fungus for 1km downstream. There were dead invertebrates present at all the downstream sample sites and in the stream in between sites.

During an Environment Agency interview under caution Northumbrian Water officials explained that the manhole cover that should have been over the outlet was missing and that they had been unaware of its existence because, when they had taken over responsibility for water and sewage from the local authority, it had not been shown on the plans provided to them.

They accepted that there had been a discharge from the outlet but argued that the degree of pollution caused by this did not cause a category one pollution incident, the worst level of pollution.

The outlet at the Ouse Burn has now been permanently stopped so that there cannot be a repetition of this incident, and another investigation last November found that the sites downstream of the discharge had recovered since March.

The court heard Northumbrian Water responded quickly to Environment Agency contact and fully co-operated throughout the incident.

The firm pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 12(1)(b) and 38(1) (a) of the Environmental Permitting (England & Wales) Regulations 2010 and was fined £10,000, ordered to pay costs of £3,802 to the Environment Agency, which brought the case, and pay a victim surcharge of £1,000.

The lead officer for the case at the Environment Agency said: "We take cases of pollution to watercourses seriously due to the environmental damage that can be caused. If anyone witnesses any pollution in their local watercourse, they can report it to our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60."

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Can you help us fund all weather pitch?

By Helen Pearce, *Chairman, Friends of Ponteland Middle School*

Ponteland Middle School is working on a project to build an all weather full size artificial pitch on the school fields next summer.

This pitch will be available to local schoolchildren, sporting clubs and the wider community.

We are already well on the way to securing funding and are very grateful to Sport England, the Football Foundation, Northumberland County Councillors, Ponteland Town Council, the Lions Club of Ponteland and the Rotary Club of Ponteland for their support, as well as local charities and businesses.

Now the Friends of Ponteland Middle School are asking members of the community to support us. Fundraising events include the Christmas Fair on November 23rd and the 'Night with the Stars' ball at the Gosforth Marriott on March 1st next year (see ads below).

We would like to ask for any cash donation, no matter how small or large as support. The Friends' will be able to reclaim any tax paid through gift aid and ask donors to furnish us with the first line of address, postcode and acknowledgement that we can claim the tax back.

There are a few, huge pitch sponsor boards proposed for the school's exterior walls advertising supporters. Following the 'all weather' idea, the design will include

a rainbow and a number of clouds; each cloud will show a sponsor's logo and name as they would like it to appear, showing our community's involvement. We are hoping to put up the first board soon.

Members of the community are also invited to contact school to discuss further details, make comments and support us in our consultation process as we prepare for the planning application.

We can be contacted at pms@pontelandmiddle.northumberland.sch.uk or on (01661) 824853.



Students raise £8,000 to fund Kenyan nursery build

Students at Ponteland Community High School have raised £8,000 to fund the building of a nursery school in a Kenyan village.

Last February a group visited Labentera, a village whose children had to walk five miles to their nearest school – a physical impossibility for the youngest.

The expedition was arranged to help John Blissett (Willet's Safaris) raise funds to support his ambition to provide education for the young children of Labentera.

The fundraising drive included sponsorship from taking part in the Great North Run, competing in the London Triathlon, organising and supporting coffee mornings and meals at Ponteland's Rendezvous restaurant.



Donations also came from local businesses and the congregation of St Mark's Church in Amble donated £500 in exchange for Ponteland staff giving a presentation about their experiences in Kenya.

In July, the school held three major events which raised over £4,500 between them. They included a Promise Auction and an end of term barbecue held by Year 12 students and their tutors. More than tonnes of clothing

were also donated, including old school uniforms, shoes etc.

The nursery school has been built on cleared scrubland just outside Labentera. Work on new toilets and furniture for the school has begun and there is enough money to complete everything before the end of the year. The school is already being used by children from a number of surrounding villages.

A message of thanks is on John Blissett's Facebook page: "...a big thank you (asante sanna) from all of us and the Maasai community near Ngoswani."

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "We needed to raise £8,000 to build a nursery school in the village and are delighted to report that the target has been reached. We must say a very big thank you to everyone involved."

Broken bones and a broken bike don't deter charity cycle couple

A Ponteland couple's charity cycle ride has raised £20,000 for a Newcastle hospital fund, despite suffering a broken bike and broken bones on route.

Andrew and Claire Morgan decided to ride the 650 miles from John O'Groats to the Diamond Inn to raise funds for the Freeman Hospital's Urology & Oncology Charity Fund after the Ponteland solicitor was successfully treated for prostate cancer.

The marathon journey was not without incident, as Andrew explained: "We were no more than a mile out of John O'Groats when a black bin liner blew across the road into my rear wheel. It got tangled up in the chain and before I knew it the derailleur had sheared off the bike and gone into the spokes. The bike was completely unusable.

"We were very lucky to find a cycle shop in nearby Thurso and, to cut a long story short, by the end of day one I had a different bike to the one I had started with.

"After this early setback we had an absolutely fantastic trip meeting some very interesting people and enjoying some fabulous scenery along the way. Some personal highlights were the Kyle of Tongue, the Nigg Ferry to cross the Cromarty Firth onto the Black Isle, the Drumochter Pass, Pitlochry and St Andrews. From Edinburgh onwards we were joined by a number of cycling friends for the trip back down the Northumberland Coast."

The broken bike wasn't the only setback they faced, however. Disaster struck at the end of the penultimate day as the couple approached their final stop at Embleton, Northumberland. Whilst cycling over the level crossing at Christon Bank, Claire's rear wheel slipped on the railway track and she had a very heavy fall, resulting in a trip by ambulance to Wansbeck Hospital A&E and a diagnosis of a broken shoulder.

Unfortunately Claire's trip was over with only one day to go, having cycled over 600 miles and with only 45 to go. Undeterred and at recently retired teacher Claire's insistence, Andrew completed the last 45 miles the following day with several friends to keep him company.

Andrew said: "Despite Claire's injury we had a most enjoyable trip, a wonderful experience that we will never forget. We are very grateful for the support that we have received for what is such a great cause. I am pleased to say that I am making an excellent recovery following my surgery which is thanks to early diagnosis and the excellent treatment I received at the Freeman Hospital."



Andrew and Claire are welcomed back at The Diamond Inn. Photo by Keith Robertson.

Christmas Fair

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Friends of Ponteland Middle School

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Contact Helen Pearce on 01661 824853

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Ponteland solicitor named 'Most Innovative Family Lawyer of the Year'



A Ponteland solicitor has been named the Most Innovative Family Lawyer of the Year at a prestigious industry awards ceremony in London.

Joanne Major, principal of Major Family Law, received the accolade at Jordan Publishing's Family Law Awards held in the Grand Ballroom at the Park Lane Hilton, attended by more than 400 family lawyers from across England and Wales.

This award recognised "the individual who the family law community recognise as having applied the most innovative solutions to promote and enhance their practice and led the way for other practitioners to follow".

Joanne was nominated for her innovative use of social media, and specifically Twitter to communicate legal advice, support and information, both to other members of the profession and to the wider lay population.

Joanne said the award, one of 16 on the night from over 60 shortlisted nominees, recognised her effective and creative use of social media to gain national recognition for the practice and investment in her team.



Resignation: Rob Punton. Photo by Trevor Walker.

Tribute paid by Mayor as councillor resigns seat

A Ponteland Town Councillor has resigned his seat, sparking a potential by-election in the town's west ward.

Rob Punton was a member of the Planning and Cemetery Committees and also the Highways Working Party.

In his resignation letter Rob said he had enjoyed his time with the Council and wanted to thank staff and fellow councillors for their support and consideration during the last 18 months.

Ponteland Mayor Peter Cowey paid tribute. He said: "Rob has decided that there are other interests he wants to pursue. His contributions to the Town Council and as a ward representative will be missed.

"In accordance with procedures, the vacancy will be advertised and will be filled by either a by-election or co-option."

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Changing family law for changing families

What do I need from a specialist family lawyer? Is that the same question as 'what do I want from a family lawyer?'

Not that many years ago, solicitors were multi-disciplined with the result that the solicitor who acted for you when you bought and sold your house would also be the same solicitor who advised you on your will or a probate matter and then acted for you or a member of your family in divorce proceedings.

Not so now, times have changed and the majority of solicitors specialise in one area of law.

Colette Stroud and Jo Scott are two such specialist family solicitors and between them they have over 45 years of experience in this field.

Colette Stroud Solicitors are a specialist family law firm and have been based at Abacus House Meadowfield, Ponteland since opening the office in 2003. The practice of family law has changed hugely over the last 10 years and as a result so has the way in which Colette and Jo act for their clients. Colette and Jo recognise that their clients want and indeed need more from their family lawyers than they did 10 years ago.

In terms of offering clients more, both Jo and Colette are ideally placed to do just that, as clients now have more options in terms of how they resolve matters when a relationship comes to an end.

Jo and Colette members of Resolution (www.resolution.org.uk) which is a national organisation of family lawyers committed to a non-confrontational approach in relation to divorce, separation and other issues arising out of relationship breakdown. They are both Resolution trained collaborative lawyers and they are the only qualified solicitor-mediators in the Ponteland and Morpeth area.

Both Colette and Jo firmly believe that all clients should have the opportunity to consider all the options that are available to them when facing the end of a relationship or commencing divorce proceedings so that they can choose the option which best suits them and their family. Both Jo and Colette are keenly aware that separation and divorce affects the whole family, not just the separating couple, grandparents and the wider extended family are also very much affected.



What is this thing called the Collaborative Process?

The Collaborative Process lets you talk through the issues you need to solve with you and your former partner each having a specially trained lawyer by your side at each meeting.

During each meeting, you and your lawyer will meet with your former partner, together with their lawyer to work out the details of your separation. This means that both you and your former partner will have support and legal advice as you go through the Collaborative Process.

Using the Collaborative Process is an attempt to solve problems without going to court. You and your lawyers sign an agreement that commits you to this aim and means that, should discussions breakdown your collaborative lawyer cannot represent you at court. This means that you are all absolutely committed to finding the best solutions by agreement.

What is Mediation?

Mediation helps couples work things out together. It is not a form of relationship counselling or a way to get a couple back together. Instead it helps couples who are separating, decide how to end their relationship and if necessary sort out financial arrangements or arrangements for children in a way that it best for them and any children.

Colette and Jo also recognise the emotional impact that separation and divorce can have on a couple and their children. The feelings of fear, loss, grief at the ending of a relationship as well as the longer term effects such as depression. Colette and Jo work closely with a large

group of qualified professionals who are ideally placed to support clients emotionally and practically through which ever process they choose.

People facing the end of a relationship are unsure whether to tell their children. If they do decide to tell them, they are equally unsure as to how or what to tell them, or indeed when. Almost all parents are worried about how the news will affect their children.

Colette and Jo fully recognise that just because a couples' relationship ends that does not mean that their relationship as parents ends as well. Both Colette and Jo can give advice and support in respect of these issues which, 10 years ago, would have been considered outside the remit of a solicitor.

Clients tell us that they need and want advice not only about the law but also about their children, the best way to support them through the end of their parents' relationship and how to try to resolve matters by agreement.

If you would like to discuss the options that are available to you, then please do not hesitate to contact either Jo or Colette who will be able to discuss matters in a confidential and sensitive way.

To contact either Jo or Colette:

e: jo.scott@cs-solicitors.co.uk,
via Twitter @joscottlawyer or via LinkedIn

e: colette.stroud@cs-solicitors.co.uk,
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