

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Police issue 'stranger danger' warning after pupil approached

Rotary Club launches new group for younger members

Weekend sporting festival in memory of former student

Back to the drawing board after £20m Merton Way scheme axed

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Produced by Cian creative pr



Swooping eagles and whistling sheep at packed park party

From swooping eagles to whistling sheep, Ponteland's Party in the Park had entertainment for all ages.

The ever popular annual event - organised by a Ponteland Churches Together committee comprising representatives of St Mary's, St Matthew's RC, Ponteland Methodist and Ponteland United Reformed Churches - was held on Sunday June 8th.

Attractions included Simonburn-based Falconry Days, Punch and Judy, a climbing wall, fire engine and performances on the

main stage from Richard Coates Middle School Choir and Orchestra, the Whistling Sheep, Ponteland Community Band, Ponteland Repertory Society and the Jill Errington School of Dance and Drama.

There were various stalls with displays of information about local organisations and a toy sale and cake sale run by Ponteland Scouts to raise funds for an eye department in the Good News Hospital in Mandritsara, Madagascar, and for the Safe Water Trust for the purchase of water filters to be taken to Tanzania.

Meanwhile MP Guy Opperman, who opened the event, showed off his shooting skills at the football challenge – scoring three goals in just 17 seconds!

Committee member Andy Anderson said: "It was absolutely heaving and it was a very good-natured event. We're grateful to all those who have supported us, especially our main sponsor Newcastle International Airport, Ponteland Town Council for allowing us to use the park and Robson and Cowan, as the main stage is actually part of one of its lorries."

Cover shot and p3 photos by Trevor Walker.

Back to the drawing board for town centre revamp

It is back to the drawing board for the long awaited redevelopment of Ponteland town centre after county regeneration chiefs pulled the plug on an ambitious £20m scheme.

It is now five years since the plans put forward by local developer Sunil Mehra received enthusiastic support at a public exhibition held at the Memorial Hall.

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

At first Northumberland County Council seemed positive about the plans, signing an exclusivity agreement with developer MKP in 2010 aimed at progressing and delivering the scheme.

But last year it became clear there were problems in negotiations as a war of words between the developer, Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Community Partnership and the county council went public.

PTC and PCP wrote a strongly worded joint open letter to then county council leader Jeff Reid and former chief executive Steve Stewart saying the authority had allowed a "totally unacceptable" and "disastrous state of affairs" to develop.

The county council responded saying it needed to be "assured that there is a sound scheme and business case in place" before proceeding and issued an ultimatum and deadline for receipt of a new business plan from MKP by May 1, 2013. Without this, the council would "proceed to consider other options for the regeneration of Merton Way".



Residents at the February 2009 public exhibition. Photo by Trevor Walker.

Mr Mehra claimed at the time that the council had withdrawn the library site on Thornhill Road from the overall scheme in direct contravention of the original development brief, making the scheme unviable as it removed the opportunity of compulsory purchase order powers needed to secure land and buildings.

Now NCC has written to Mr Mehra and the PCP regeneration sub group chairman Raymond Sproul confirming council support for the scheme has been withdrawn.

In a statement the authority said: "We recognise the importance of a vibrant town centre to the Ponteland community, and a considerable amount of work has been done over the last few years with the aim of securing a suitable regeneration scheme based on the Merton Way area.

"We have been in discussion with local members about the options available to progress with this, and have now asked Arch, the Northumberland Development Company, to work with the local community to identify a preferred way forward.

"We would like to thank MKP Ponteland for their interest and work done on this to date."

Mr Mehra replied: "As a member of the Ponteland community myself, I'm very disappointed by this news. The regeneration scheme for Merton Way has already been through consultation with the local community. It was overwhelmingly decided that our scheme was the preferred option. We were given a commitment to develop our scheme and continued to work with Northumberland County Council, Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Community Partnership on that basis.

"The decision announced now by Northumberland County Council to re-start the process using its own development company is surprising and contrary to the council's commitment to enter a development agreement with us. Needless to say we are reviewing the situation and consulting our lawyers about it."

What do you think?
Write to Your letters at
pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk

New officers elected at Community Partnership AGM

By Brian Prickett

At the Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership held on May 21st, the following officers and members of the Executive Council were elected to serve for the next 12 months.

Officers:

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

Sub Group Chairmen:

Regeneration – Ray Sproul
Environment – George Clasper
Youth – Rob Anderson
Transport – David Gambles
Neighbourhood Plan Steering group – Alma Dunigan

Executive Council Members:

Mike Brown, Frank Harrington, Sheila Campbell, Margaret Stainsby and Robin Ramsay.

Co-opted Members:

PC Rob Anderson (Police)
Peter Cowey (Ponteland Town Council)
Churches Together (Faith representative)





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GRANT APPLICATIONS

A £500 grant was approved subject to planning approval being granted following an application from Holy Saviour Church at Milbourne regarding a project to install mains water and a toilet.

ANNUAL AUDIT 2013-14

The Council considered and approved the Annual Return which must be submitted to the external auditors by June 30th. A copy of the internal auditor's report, which raised no issues, was also considered.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Council approved a recommendation from the Working Party, which met on May 19th, to remove the bird hide from its current location on Fox Covert Lane after notification from Friends of the Park that they did not want to replace the structure. Consultation would be held with interested parties such as the RSPB before removal. The Council also approved the installation of a litter bin at the back of Merton Way shops subject to agreement from the County Council that they would empty the bin.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on April 21st and a recommendation to order a further VAS speed indicator sign for use on Cheviot View was agreed. Councillors were asked to suggest another location to rotate with this sign.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Coun Dodd reported that he was still awaiting a date for a meeting relating to the car parking situation at the back of Merton Way. He reported on the West Area Meeting that had been held at Merton Hall on June 10th. Information relating to proposed changes for Dobbies roundabout would be discussed at the next meeting. Coun Dodd also referred to the proposals relating to Post 16 transport which would have a big impact on rural areas. It was reported that it was possible the housing numbers in the Core Strategy for Ponteland and Hexham would be reduced. Further reductions were being sought which may result in a delay to the finalisation of the Core Strategy.

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

Clare tees off new Rotary club for younger members

A pioneering new satellite group is being launched by Ponteland Rotary Club aimed at younger members.

Believed to be only the second of its kind in the country, the new group is aimed at budding Rotarians still of working age unable to commit to attending the weekly meetings held by the main Rotary Club.

Darras Hall architect Clare Stagg is behind the new initiative, supported by Richard Knight, operations director at Newcastle Airport.

Clare, who runs Wearside-based Planit Design, explained: "Ponteland Rotary Club has a membership of around 30 with an average age of over 70. There are lots of younger people who also want to get involved in Rotary Club activities but are unable due to work and family commitments to attend weekly meetings and other regular activities.

"This new satellite group is designed to be more flexible, meeting more infrequently and developing its own events programme to support the fundraising activities of the main Rotary Club. Hopefully it will appeal to younger people in Ponteland."

There are around a dozen people who have already indicated they wish to join the satellite group and early ideas for new fundraising events include a vintage car rally.

Ponteland Rotary Club, founded in 1964, currently holds two annual golfing

competitions in April/May, the Duck Race in Ponteland Park every September and the October gala concert at the Britannia Hotel, Newcastle Airport. Members meet over dinner with a guest speaker every Tuesday at Ponteland Golf Club.

Rotarian Alan Hall, who received the chains of office from outgoing President Peter Lowry at a Rotary dinner at the Beresford Arms, Whalton, on June 24th, added: "We are trying to raise the profile of the Rotary Club and increase membership, building up the events programme so we can increase our fundraising for good causes."

If you would like to find out more about joining Ponteland Rotary Club or its new satellite group contact Alan at alfonse2010@me.com or by calling 07740 866764.

Main pic: Clare Stagg tees off the new satellite group. Below: new President Alan Hall receives the chains of office from Rotarian Peter Lowry. Photos by Trevor Walker.





'Stranger danger' warning after motorist approaches pupil

By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Community Beat Manager

In the period between May 15th and June 12th we have had four crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- One make off without payment
- Two thefts from shops
- One damage to a motor vehicle.

Three of the offences have been detected and enquiries are ongoing in relation to the outstanding theft from the shop.

Following a recent call to police from a concerned parent regarding their child being approached by a passing motorist whilst on their way to school, this may be a good time for you all to remind your children about 'Stranger Danger'.

This is something the schools cover with ourselves on a yearly basis to make children

aware. Please contact us if you would like any advice.

Now the weather seems to be getting better and if you are doing any work in the garden or just spending time outdoors please remember to take any valuable items back inside when you go in for the evening.

Don't leave anything in the garden which could be picked up and carried away by an opportunist thief.

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:

- PC Lee Davison 12th July
11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay Village shop
- PC Rob Anderson 26th July
10am - 11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson 26th July
11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

- CSO Paul Cotterill 2nd August
9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland

We also have engagement days at these venues and dates:

- 10am to 12noon 16th July Merton Way, Ponteland
- 1pm to 3pm 16th July Broadway, Ponteland
- 1pm to 3pm 23rd July Stamfordham/ Belsay/Matten

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Summer Zoo club

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Your letters

Praise for the organisers of Party in the Park and some Good Samaritans in this month's letters...

Thank you for Party in the Park

I would like to thank the Churches Together for organising the Party in the Park on June 8th.

A lot of work goes in to organising an event of that size and it was very good to see that the event was so well attended. Thank you to all who worked to make the event such a success.

Carl Rawlings

Mayor, Ponteland Town Council

Young people who helped me could not have been nicer

I wish to thank the young ladies and a lady and a young couple with a dog who helped me get over the barrier at the old railway in my mobility scooter.


I didn't know there was a barrier there, and I got stuck. Young people get a bad name nowadays, but they couldn't have been nicer.

Doreen Thompson

Elmwood Drive
Ponteland

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

August issue deadlines: Delivery of the August issue will start on Wednesday July 30th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday July 14th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the August issue.



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

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

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What's on...

Ponteland U3A

Our monthly speaker on Wednesday July 2nd is Bob Crosby. His topic is 'Memoirs of an old sports commentator'. We meet at 2pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road. Visitors always welcome. No charge for coming. On Wednesday July 16th we celebrate 20 years of leisure learning and friendship in our Ponteland U3A with a buffet lunch. Details of all our activities can be found on our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland

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 July 5th.

1st Ponteland Girls' Brigade celebrates its 50th anniversary

1st Ponteland Girls' Brigade is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. We are holding a celebration service on Saturday July 5th at 2pm in Ponteland Methodist Church followed by refreshments and displays in the church hall and garden party and BBQ in the church garden. We will then end the celebration weekend with a Family Service and Parade on Sunday July 6th in Ponteland Methodist Church, starting at 10am. We invite all past members of 1st Ponteland Girls' Brigade to join us in celebrating 50 years of the Girls' Brigade in Ponteland, for more information please contact pontelandgb@hotmail.co.uk

Ponteland WI

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday July 8th at 7pm in the Memorial Hall, Darras Hall. New members and visitors most welcome. Our speaker will be Peter Weighill and the subject is 'North East Monologues'. The competition for the meeting is titled 'a bookmark'.

Darras Hall WI

Visitors are invited to the next meeting of Darras Hall WI on Thursday July 10th at 2pm in the URC Hall, Broadway, Darras Hall. The speaker will be Frances Hedley talking about Horrockses Cotton Dresses. Established in 1946, Horrockses were one of the first and best makers of ready to wear clothing for women. Continuing on the cotton theme this month's competition is for a cotton tea towel.

Ponteland Methodist Church

The church is celebrating a bicentennial year (1814 – 2014) with a number of extra activities. In July a concert to be given by the Bedlington Salvation Army Band and Songsters on Saturday July 12th commencing at 7pm. A strawberry supper will be served after the performance. Tickets priced at £7 can be reserved with Syd Cowan (01661) 824459 and collected at the door. Also that weekend (11th to 13th July) there will be a display of the History

of Methodism in Ponteland in the Stobert Room in the church. You do not need to come to the concert to view the display. A date for the diary – November 30th 2014 – when the President of the Methodist Conference will be the preacher at 10am.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday July 14th is Richard Winter, whose talk is entitled 'Contemporary Dentistry'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

The next meeting of Ponteland Floral Art Club will be held on July 15th at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall. The demonstrator is Anne Codd of Ponteland. Anne is a well respected local tutor and area demonstrator, and the subject is 'Summertime'. The cost for visitors to this event is £7.

Happy Days at Merton Hall

Happy Days is an afternoon drop in at Merton Hall for people to get together and remember good times. The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month from 1.30pm to 3pm. Come along and have cup of tea or coffee, share some of your memories, be inspired with a surprise package from Beamish Museum. Have fun with games and music from the past and present or enjoy a soothing hand massage. Merton Hall is also open for morning coffee, tea, and hot chocolate from Monday to Saturday from 9.30am to 11.15am. You can read the papers or magazines and have a cuppa with a refill for only 30p. Our Annual General Meeting will be held on August 7th at 2pm. All are welcome to attend.

Railway and archive films at St Mary's

Saturday July 19th at 3pm and 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall on Thornhill Road. Railway and archive films of the beautiful line from Settle to Carlisle. Admission free, doughnuts in the interval.

Choral Evensong at St Mary's

Sunday July 20th at 6.30pm - Choral Evensong at St Mary's with our choir and the choir of St Andrew's Church, Corbridge. Traditional Evensong, with two good choirs, and a glass of wine afterwards. All welcome.

North East Koi Club

Koi, Bonsai and Craft Show at Kirkley Hall on Saturday and Sunday July 26th and 27th from 9.30am - 5pm both days. Free entry. This is our 13th Open Koi Show. We have exhibitors and dealers from near and far and we hope that during your visit you can begin to understand just why koi such as these on display today are considered to be 'living jewels'. Many of these koi have made an incredible journey and we are

very fortunate to bring you some of the best koi in the country to view. As well as the magnificent fish, we will have an incredible selection of Bonsai on show. Our craft dealers will also be in attendance. There will be lots to see including workshops and lectures. For more information about the show and our club, visit our website at www.northeastkoiclub.co.uk

Embroiderers' Guild Ponteland branch

Meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, on the 4th Monday of each month from 2pm to 4pm (on Bank Holidays the meeting is held the previous Monday). The programme is varied and can feature traditional techniques, contemporary approaches, machine and computer technology, fashion and accessories, patchwork, quilting and embroidery from other cultures. Everyone, whatever their level of experience, is very welcome at meetings and workshops. You can become a member or join us for a meeting as a visitor (£2) and never even pick up a needle! Contact the secretary at eg_ne_ponteland@btinternet.com or on (01661) 881395.



Enjoy some music in the park this weekend

One of Ponteland Park's popular annual family events, Music in the Park, is being held this weekend.

The Ponteland Town Council event, being held from 2.30pm to 5.30pm this Sunday June 29th, is being compered by BBC Radio Newcastle's Jonathan Miles.

Acts include singer Sonia Michelle, North Tyneside Steel Band, Rendezvous Jazz Band, Ponteland Community Band and The Jill Errington School of Dance. Entry is free.

In the event of bad weather the event will be at the Memorial Hall.

A performer from North Tyneside Steel Band at last year's Music in the Park event. Photo by Trevor Walker.

PONTFEST™

PontFest will take place on Sunday 24th August 2014 at Ponteland High School, with the aim of bringing together the community of Ponteland and surrounding areas.

There will be fun for all the family with live music, entertainment and plenty of food and drink.

One of the highlights of the day will be the Rainbow Run followed by PontFest's own festival of colour.

Pontfest is to support The Simon Bates Foundation in working towards raising funds that will help local sporting charities.

The Simon Bates Foundation was set up last year in honour of 30-year-old Simon Bates from Ponteland, who tragically lost his life in an accident on Mont Blanc whilst on holiday last year. Inspired by the way Simon lived his life, the event is all about getting people participating in a sport that they wouldn't normally dream of taking part in to raise funds that will help support two sporting charities in our bid to reach a £30,000 goal.

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Ponteland Community High School Report

School hosts weekend festival to raise funds in memory of former pupil

A charity sporting festival in memory of a former Ponteland High student is being held in the school's grounds in August.

Relatives of thrill seeking Simon Bates, who tragically lost his life in an accident on Mont Blanc aged just 30 last September, have set up a foundation to honour his love of life and passion for helping others.

The Simon Bates Foundation works to distribute funds to projects, which provide young people with opportunities to better their lives.

'PontFest' which is being staged by AMV Live Music to raise funds for the Foundation, will kick off at 12noon Sunday August 24th with live bands and DJs, drinks, food and fairground rides. One of the highlights of the day will be the Rainbow Run at 3pm.

It is hoped more than 300 competitors will run in two races – a 2k for juniors and a 5k for seniors, parents and teachers – with runners pummelled with colourful powder as they complete the course.

Mick Forster, owner of AMV Live Music and Simon's brother in law, said: "For anyone who ever had the pleasure to meet Simon, knew what passion he had for life and adventure. He was full of fun and laughter, so a 'fun run' where you get covered in bursts of colour would have been right up his street.

"Simon always encouraged everyone to be the best they could be and help others build a better future for themselves by teaching them how to do things on their own. The foundation was set up to support causes that share these values."

Headteacher Kieran McGrane added: "Simon was a much loved former pupil of the high school so it's very exciting to be able to hold this event on our grounds for such a wonderful cause. We urge pupils and the public to come along, join in the runs, help raise money and enjoy what will be a very 'colour-infused' festival."

PontFest is a free to enter festival and costs to participate in the runs are £10 for U16s and £20 for adults. To find out more about PontFest visit www.pontfest.co.uk and www.simonbatesfoundation.com to find out about the work of the foundation or to make a donation.



Simon Bates, who was tragically killed in an accident on holiday in the French Alps last year.

Calling all potential tutors

Do you have any skills or hobbies that you think others would be interested in learning? Could you teach and share these skills with others?

Ponteland High School is working towards taking over responsibility for Community Adult Learning in Ponteland, with an aim to deliver more learning courses that will not be exam based but will enable the people of Ponteland and the surrounding areas to learn new skills, meet new friends and have fun!

We are therefore looking to recruit new tutors on a casual basis to deliver evening classes here at Ponteland High School.

If this is something that you would be interested in or you know somebody who would, please contact Adult Learning Coordinator Rebecca Coxon at rco@pchs.northumberland.sch.uk or on (01661) 864423.

If you have any suggestions for classes that you would like Ponteland Community Adult Learning to provide, please also let us know.

Office opening hours (term time only):

Monday	5.30pm – 9.30pm
Tuesday	5.30pm – 9.30pm
Wednesday	5.30pm – 9.30pm

Ponteland's 'hidden garden' opens for British Red Cross

By Muriel Sobo

Eland Green Garden will be open to the public for the first time on Sunday July 13th.

Found along the North Road, just past the Berwick Hill turning, the garden is protected by high hedges, trees and stone walls. It is mainly the creation of Francis Stephenson, father of the present owner Clare Stephenson, and extends to about two acres.

Wrought iron decorative gates, hedges and shrubs are all used to great effect and give an intimate feel to the varied divisions of the garden. A pair of stone lions a pair of griffins and a unique sundial add interest.

The Stephensons are probably the oldest family living in Ponteland since three brothers bought Eland Green Farm in 1803 from George Silvertop of Minsteracres.

Eland Green Garden is open from 11am – 4.30pm on Sunday July 13th. None of



Flowering shrubs and sculpture in a corner of the garden

the garden is visible from the North Road; follow the signs to the entrance on the right past the Berwick Hill turning.

Ponteland Lions are helping with teas and a bookstall and there is a tennis competition for interested players.

Ponteland's biggest social club has lunch to celebrate 20th anniversary

By Muriel Sobo

Ponteland's biggest social club is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a celebratory lunch.

Ponteland Leisure Learning, which has around 350 members, is part of the national U3A which caters for those not in full time work and who still want to learn, socialise and take up new skills.

There are forty informal groups with very diverse interests, from scrabble to Tai Chi

to art to French, and new groups are encouraged.

A celebratory buffet lunch is to be held for members on Wednesday July 16th in the Memorial Hall. Contact Frank Harrington (01670) 775433 or visit the website www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland for details.

There are three quite different walking groups to suit a range of abilities. Here Monday walkers explore the Bluebell Woods around Morpeth.





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New Community Trust plans public launch

By Peter Sutcliffe,
Director, Ponteland Community Trust

A new trust set up to raise funds for community facilities in Ponteland is to launch with a public meeting this autumn.

Ponteland Community Trust (PCT) was formed recently and is in the process of becoming a recognised charity with the objective of raising funds for the benefit of local support services for residents.

PCT has received advice, support and guidance from Northumberland County Council, following the successful launches of community trusts in Wooler and Prudhoe.

The charity board will comprise two Ponteland councillors, two local business representatives, three members from the local voluntary service sector - including one from Ponteland Community Partnership, two professional specialists and three further local, suitably experienced and skilled members.

As an independent charity, PCT will be able to apply for match funding and grants to support initiatives that perhaps the county or town councils would not be able to pursue.

The trust has brought together locally qualified professionals with a wealth of experience in large project management, finance and business and has also managed to find an expert in obtaining match funding from the EU and other sources to help the trust.

PCT is in the early stages of finalising its constitution and is to consult local volunteer groups shortly prior to a public meeting planned for September to publicise the overall aims and objectives and to co-opt support members.

For more information please contact PeterSutcliffe@TalkTalk.net

Inter-trading opportunities at Ponteland Business Network

The May meeting of 'Ponteland Means Business' was privileged to have Ponteland's own Editor of Pont News and Views who was able to provide an insight into the objectives of the publication and how we can best use all of the services available.

The Ponteland Business Network was thanked for its strong support and sponsorship of the 1st Ponteland Beer Festival by Andy Maidwell. He gave us an update on how successful the event had been and we all congratulated Andy and his team on a well organised and thoroughly entertaining festival.

Once again we had a round robin update from our

members and how we can, and are helping each other's businesses. If you are a local business, retail, commerce etc, and wish to meet like minded people to help you with prosperous growth then do come along.

Our meetings are held on the second Friday of the month at 7.45am at The Diamond in a room full of friendly faces. Our next meeting is on Friday 11th July. Already a lot of inter-company trade has been generated and members realise Ponteland is a better place to do business.

Contact Brian Russell, Russell and Co Chartered Accountants, at PBN@profitabilitygroup.co.uk or on (01661) 872004.



'Duchess' presents student awards

Students from Ponteland's Kumon centre had to do a double take when they received their awards at a ceremony at the Memorial Hall.

For the presentations of certificates and medals were made by Duchess of Cambridge lookalike Heidi Agan.

The ceremony was attended by 265 students of the Kumon maths and English programmes and their parents.

Liz Burrin, instructor at the study centre, said: "This annual event is my favourite

day of the year. I am so proud of my students and this is an opportunity to recognise and congratulate each child on the hard work they have put in to their studies every day."

Established for over 50 years, the Kumon programmes enable children to develop their independent study skills and confidently tackle advanced work beyond the international standard for their age. More than 66,000 children study at over 650 centres across the UK.

Keerthi and Harshita Komati receive their awards from the 'Duchess'. Photo by Keith Robertson.



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Liz Burrin **01661 823273**

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Village WI celebrates first year with Mad Hatter's Tea Party

By Muriel Sobo

Forty members and guests came to the Mad Hatter's Tea Party to mark the first anniversary of Ponteland Village Women's Institute.

Everyone was asked to wear a Mad Hat and not only enjoy fabulous food, prepared in traditional manner by the inventive hands of members, but engage the grey cells in quizzes which were quite testing; film titles from pictures, recognise the celebrities and crosswords.

It was a magic night where the youngest guest was only seven weeks old, but she did bring her mother along!

The latest Women's Institute in Ponteland is growing strongly and has a membership of working women and full time mothers of all ages. They have a strong involvement with local firms and businesses through a diverse talks programme and have contacts with the County Federation but for these busy women time is a constraint.

They use email and Facebook to spread their message and welcome any women who seek social contact and share a very varied programme of speakers and activities once a month. They meet on the second Tuesday of each month in St Mary's Church Hall.



Four mad hats ready to party!



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