

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Police seek volunteers to help catch speeding motorists

Public inquiry confirmed for 280-home green belt scheme

Win family ticket for the Knights' Tournament at Belsay Hall: see p10

Showers fail to dampen spirits at Music in the Park



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Brolly dollies dodge the rain at park show

Families braved the changeable weather to enjoy an afternoon of free musical entertainment in the park.

Around 200 people attended Ponteland's Music in the Park event, dodging the showers as they watched performances from acts including singer Nicola Brown, North Tyneside Steel Band, Rendezvous Jazz Band, Ponteland Community Band and The Jill Errington School of Dance.

Ponteland Town Mayor Coun Carl Rawlings said: "It went very well – a really enjoyable afternoon. All of the performances were excellent - a great variety of music by all the bands and the powerful singer Nicola Brown. Compere Jonathan Miles of BBC Radio Newcastle was also great fun, entertaining and lively.

"The weather was changeable. At times sultry, breezy and wet but, as they say, spirits were not dampened by the rain. In fact, at one point, the rain prompted a brolly dolly walkabout in front of the band!

"I thanked several people who were involved in the planning - Jim Robertson, Stewart Blair, Andy Anderson and Town Clerk Kath Mavin. I would also like to thank the Scouts for all their help in assembling the marquee and for all the residents who attended on an afternoon of mixed weather but outstanding music."

Music in the Park, now in its fifth year, is one of a number of community events run as part of the Town Council's vision of giving residents a real sense of pride in Ponteland.

Photos by Trevor Walker

Developer provides platform for objectors

A developer who has built a 65ft long viewing platform with illuminated advertising hoardings without planning permission to promote a luxury housing scheme in Darras Hall faces angry objections from locals.

Newcastle-based Lugano Group has built the 9ft high structure at the entrance to 50 Runnymede Road, where it controversially obtained permission to build five new homes.

The planning approval by Northumberland County Council ultimately led to a major fallout at Darras Hall Estate Committee last year which saw five committee members resign.

The Committee has expressed concerns that the temporary wooden decked structure which Lugano has retrospectively applied for permission for, for up to two years, could cause traffic congestion and pose a safety risk.

Objections have also come from Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Civic Society and homeowners in Runnymede Road, Willow Way and Beech Court.

The Civic Society wrote in its objection letter that the hoardings 'could prove hazardous', distracting drivers at an adjoining crossroads, and claimed the illuminated platform could attract anti-social behaviour.

Another objector from Beech Court, describing the erection as 'an enormous advertising hoarding', wrote: "How is it that Lugano can build such structures before they have been considered by planners and councillors?"

"What sort of traffic chaos would result if passing cars suddenly stopped to look at this monstrosity? The size and scale of such a hoarding would be out of place on an industrial estate. On Runnymede Road, a quiet residential street with tree-lined boundaries, it is an obscenity and completely out of order. Lugano are sticking up two fingers at the planners and local people..."



Photo by Keith Robertson

A neighbouring Runnymede Road resident added: "How would any of their top directors in Lugano feel if they woke up the next morning with a massive steel monstrosity in front of their windows? I'm sure they would be livid just like me."

The county council's highways department has recommended refusal of planning permission, saying the hoarding would have an adverse impact on the safety of road users as it was likely to encourage parking on the verge, interrupting the free flow of traffic.

County council planning officers have the power to refuse permission, but if they recommend approval the application will go to members of the west area planning committee for a decision.

A spokesperson for Lugano said: "It is purely intended as a temporary structure to promote the scheme and has been constructed in good quality materials and in a way that highlights the special nature of the site. Following discussion with the local authority, we have been undertaking daily monitoring of the site to establish if any highway issues have arisen. We are confident that this will demonstrate that any concerns on safety are unfounded."

Government calls in housing scheme for public inquiry

The decision on controversial plans for a 280-home development on Ponteland's Green Belt will rest with a Government Minister after the scheme was called in.

A public inquiry will be held in the autumn and the presiding inspector will recommend approval or refusal to the Secretary of State.

Last October Northumberland County Council's west area planning committee unanimously rejected the planning application by Lugano for the £96m scheme for the 82 hectare site at Birney Hill citing six reasons:

- inappropriate and inefficient development in the Green Belt
- demonstrable harm to the landscape character of the open countryside

- insufficient information provided on the archaeological potential of the site
- potential for surface water creating flood risk elsewhere
- impact of aircraft noise on future residents and potential impact of development on Newcastle Airport's Instrument Landing System
- impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Lugano said the scheme would create 900 jobs and included 70 "affordable" homes, a farm shop and café, 650m² of office floorspace and 18 hectares of publicly accessible open space, with 39 hectares retained in agricultural use and managed as part of a Community Trust by a farm manager.

But the plans generated a vociferous opposition campaign, with over 4,300

letters of objection to the county council and dozens of 'Ponteland Says No To Green Belt Development' signs adorning the main road into the village.

Objectors also included Ponteland Town Council, the Environment Agency, Newcastle Airport and Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman.

Last October Lugano described the planning decision as "flawed in many respects" but the county council said it was based on both technical issues and fundamental planning principles which "provided a sound basis on which to refuse the application".

The firm lodged an appeal and will now have to persuade a Government planning inspector and the Secretary of State that the original refusal decision was wrong. The date and venue for the planning inquiry are yet to be announced.



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PRESENTATION TO FORMER MAYOR

At the start of the meeting the Mayor Carl Rawlings presented former Mayor Peter Cowey with a badge showing his term of office.

MERTON WAY REGENERATION PROJECT

The Council considered a report relating to the decision by the County Council not to proceed with the preferred developer's scheme for the Merton Way shopping area. It appeared that this would be carried out by their developer, Arch. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to NCC seeking a meeting with them and the Ponteland Community Partnership to establish details of the action plan for implementing this project. The Council is dissatisfied at the lack of communication from NCC on this matter and is seeking an explanation for why members had not been informed directly of the decision made by NCC.

PONTELAND ROTARY CLUB SATELLITE GROUP – CHRISTMAS MARKET IDEA

The Mayor has received a letter from the Rotary Club satellite group asking for the Council's opinion on a suggestion to hold a Christmas market in Merton Way and on Thornhill Road in 2015. It is hoped to attract craft and food stalls and some entertainment as well as Christmas activities. It was noted that the Group would need to get in touch with the NCC Markets Officer to obtain the necessary advice and permission. The Town Council was in favour of the idea and it was agreed to pass on details of the Markets Officer to the Rotary Club satellite group.

FUNDING FOR MULTI USE GAMES AREA (MUGA)

As part of the budget deliberations for 2014-15, the Council agreed a contribution of £10,000 towards the cost of the MUGA, which will be located on land owned by NCC at Ponteland Middle School. Funding had now been received from the Football Foundation and Sport England and the Town Council has been asked to release its contribution to NCC, which would be dealing with the project as landowners. The Council agreed to the release of the £10,000 contribution subject to the funding being returned if the project did not proceed for any reason.

SKATE PARK

It has been necessary to close the skate park temporarily whilst some remedial works are being carried out together with some additional works to reduce the noise from the facility following a complaint received from a resident.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on June 16th and the Council approved its recommendation in relation to memorial trees within the park. No further trees would be planted in the areas near to the Scout Hut and Park House due to the drainage issues, but the area next to the tennis courts is still available. An agreement for memorial trees was approved. The Council also approved the purchase of two additional litter bins on Thornhill Road subject to obtaining the agreement of NCC to empty them.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on June 18th and it was agreed that a quote for necessary repairs to the roof of one of the shelters be accepted at a cost of £1292.50. The Council also approved the recommendation relating to the rotation of speed indicator signs on a three monthly basis. As part of the wish list items for 2014-15 it had been agreed to purchase another speed indicator sign for Cheviot View. This was in respect of a 30mph roundel however after discussions at the Working Party it was suggested that a solar powered 'Your Speed' sign could be acquired for an additional sum. The Council agreed to delegate authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Highways Working Party to obtain such a sign if possible.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor 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 referred to the widespread abuse of the use of this car park and the various problems in the mornings and afternoons with the school traffic.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor's Diary

Details of the Mayor's diary since taking office had been circulated to Councillors for information. Information regarding forthcoming commitments was included on the Town Council's website.

Music in the Park event

The Mayor thanked all of those involved in the planning and organisation of the above event held on June 29th. Despite the sometimes poor weather all those in attendance had enjoyed the afternoon's entertainment.

Town Centre Challenge Event at Ponteland High School – 11 July 2014

The Mayor thanked those Councillors and others who had agreed to be part of a judging panel at the above event on July 11th.

Choral Communion at St. Mary's Church – August 3rd

An invitation had been received from St. Mary's Church for Councillors to attend the above service on August 3rd at 10am to mark the outbreak of WWI.

Service of Commemoration at Hexham Abbey – August 3rd

The Mayor and a guest have been invited to attend the above service at Hexham Abbey on August 3rd at 4pm. The invitation had been received from the Lord Lieutenant, the Duchess of Northumberland. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be attending.

This report is based on the minutes of the meeting of Ponteland Town Council held on July 9th.



Volunteers sought to help catch speeding motorists



By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Community Beat Manager

In the period between June 13th and July 14th we have had seven crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- Two possession of cannabis
- Two common assaults
- Two damages to motor vehicles
- One theft of a pedal cycle.

Four of the offences have been detected and enquiries are ongoing in relation to the outstanding damages to motor vehicles and theft of the pedal cycle.

Northumbria Police is recruiting for its Community Speedwatch scheme from July 15th to August 10th. The scheme was first launched in June 2011 in Rothbury, and following its success it is now being extended to Sunderland, Gateshead, North Tyneside and Newcastle.

It allows local people to assist in tackling

issues with speeding in their community. Volunteers will receive the necessary training to monitor the speed of motorists in an area identified by the local community.

The scheme aims to educate motorists and those caught driving above the limit by the volunteers will receive a letter from police. If they're caught more than once, an officer will visit them at home.

Information gained from CSW can be invaluable to operational policing – it can identify an area where speeding is an issue and police need to take action, provide information about repeat speeders to the Operation Dragoon team and help dispel community concerns where it is perceived speeding is an issue.

Volunteers will be asked to complete a short application form and if successful attend an informal meeting. More information about how to apply is available on the Northumbria Police website at www.northumbria.police.uk

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 August 2nd 9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison August 16th 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay village shop
- PC Rob Anderson August 30th 10am - 11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson August 30th 11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

We also have Engagement Days at these venues and dates:

- August 13th 1pm to 3pm Stamfordham/ Belsay/Matfen
- August 27th 10am to 12noon Merton Way, Ponteland
- August 27th 1pm to 3pm Broadway, Ponteland

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Sunday 7th September
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The Editor
Pont News & Views



An open garden success story, warning to parents about anti-social behaviour and sad news to shame a vandal in this month's letters...

Thank you for making charity garden opening a success

Having opened my garden for The British Red Cross yesterday, I would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who helped get the event up and running.

Firstly, a huge thank you to all the Ponteland Lions, for which, without their help, this would not have happened.

To Waitrose for supplying the beverages free of charge, Councillor Richard Dodd for supplying chairs, Glen Harrison at Northumberland County Council for the parking cones.

Cowells Garden Centre at Woosington for supplying planted pots to sell. HB Opticians in Darras Hall who sponsored the leaflets and Ponteland Print who produced them.

Muriel Sobo for an excellent write up in Pont News. Marian Foster at BBC Radio Newcastle's Garden Mania programme for giving the event air time. The Morpeth Herald, The Hexham Courant, The Northumbrian magazine and Karen Overbury at The Journal, all who gave free advertising through articles in their respective publications.

The NFU at Morpeth for free third party insurance for the day and members of Ponteland Tennis Club for the tennis challenge.

Lastly a very big thank you to everyone who came to see the garden, who made the event such a success. I am pleased to say we raised £1,100 for The British Red Cross.

Clare Stephenson

Eland Green Farm
North Road
Ponteland

Vandal struck the night my wife paid last visit to her dying mother

After reading in the July issue of damage caused to a vehicle in the Ponteland area I thought it may be of interest to report another incident of car vandalism.

My wife and I parked outside her sister's house on Western Way on Saturday July 5th in the evening after visiting my mother-in-law Margaret Thompson, who was terminally ill at the Marie Curie Cancer Care Hospice.

The following morning when it was light I discovered a deep, long scratch along both passenger doors. We also received news that Margaret had passed away earlier in the morning.

Alan Reed

Cheviot View
Ponteland

Please play football elsewhere

This is a request to the parents of youths who continually play football on the main road and outside of people's property up and down Thornhill Road most days and, recently, after 11 o'clock at night.

Please have some consideration for people living on this road.

It has been an ongoing problem for some years now and it's time it was resolved. Police have knocked on several doors but it appears to have little effect.

Not only are they noisy and disruptive but they are a danger to cars driving up and down the road as they kick the ball in front of them, causing them to have to slow down or stop.

They stand in front of people's windows kicking the ball and it is very antagonistic.

So again, a request to parents to take responsibility for their children or we will have to take a step further in this matter.

Name and address supplied.

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.

September issue deadlines: Delivery of the September issue will start on Thursday August 28th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday August 11th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the September issue.

*The Stable
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What's on...

County Council surgeries

Your local Northumberland County Councillors Richard Dodd, Peter Jackson, Veronica Jones and Eileen Armstrong are available to meet constituents on the first Saturday of every month from 10am-11am at Waitrose supermarket, Ponteland and Broadway, Darras Hall. Their next surgery is on Saturday August 2nd.

Ponteland Ramblers

Ponteland Ramblers have organised walks on the following dates in August: Sunday 3rd from Scots Gap, Sunday 17th from Wooler Common and Sunday 31st from Middleton. There will also be Wednesday walks on August 13th and 27th, details still to be finalised. People who are not Ramblers members are welcome to join us as guests for a few walks. For more information contact Steve Edwards on (01661) 886310.

Ponteland U3A

Our speakers on Wednesday August 6th are Harry and Kath Gilbert. Their presentation is 'Land of Ice and Fire'. This tour of Iceland will be in made in the form of a Nordic saga. We meet in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road at 2pm. Visitors welcome. No Charge.

For details of our activities visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring the membership secretary on (01661) 822225.

Ponteland Business Network

The next meeting of 'Ponteland Means Business' is being held on Friday August 8th. If you are a local business 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. 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.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday August 11th is Keith Stewart, whose talk is entitled 'Railways to Ponteland, Darras Hall and Kirkheaton'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm.

Ponteland Village WI

Ponteland Village WI meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall. We now have a healthy membership of young mums and professional women across the ages 30s, 40s and 50s who join us for speakers, events, fundraising and friendship. Alongside our meetings we also run sub groups of running, walking, dine out, book club and theatre - which meet weekly/monthly. The best way to keep up to date is via our Facebook page at Ponteland Village WI - where you'll find all the latest events, photos, competitions and recipes. Our next event is on Tuesday August 12th, meeting at 7.30pm at The Blackbird car park. We will then be partaking in a car treasure hunt, following clues taking us out and about around Northumberland. We will end the evening with food. All are welcome.

Embroiderers' Guild Ponteland branch

Monday 18th August. Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild meet at 2pm in the The Memorial Hall, Darras Road. Why not join us as we continue 'Exploring Stitches'. Today we will explore Couching, a method of laying down threads and attaching them to fabric. Visitors welcome Fee £3. Membership of the Branch and the Embroiderers' Guild to open to all, from the leisure stitcher to the talented professional and keen student. Contact: eg_ne_ponteland@btinternet.com or the secretary on (01661) 881395.

Variety Club Charity Golf Day: Thursday August 28th

The Children's Charity is organising a golf day at Ponteland Golf Club on Thursday August 28th. With a 'shotgun' start at 1pm, teams of four will compete for the Variety Club trophy. Cost per team is £220 which includes coffee & bacon

roll on arrival and a two course meal afterwards. There will be an excellent range of prizes and we will be auctioning a 4-ball for Sunningdale Golf Club, one of the premier courses in the world. Anyone interested in entering a team can do so by contacting Gillian Farnell, at: north@variety.org.uk or on (0191) 214 5959.

25th anniversary Duck Race: Sunday August 31st

The 25th anniversary Duck Race takes place on Sunday August 31st at Ponteland Park from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. The event also marks 50 years since Ponteland Rotary was established. Around 500 ducks will be used in five different races with a huge range of prizes to be won. The programme includes five to 11-year-olds making their own boats to race on the River Pont and another new addition is a local produce market with stalls and stands of food for sale. The usual activities and displays include a bouncy slide, hurdy gurdy organ, tombola, face-painting, cake stall and coconut shy.

Ponteland Wildlife Group of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Tuesday September 2nd sees the start of our new season of monthly meetings with an illustrated talk entitled 'My Favourite Weeds' by Andrew Sawyer, Conservation Officer for the National Trust at Cragside. All are welcome to attend at St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road in the village, starting at

7.30pm. £2 per person including refreshments.

Merton Hall's 50th anniversary celebration

Merton Hall 50th anniversary celebration on Saturday September 20th will start at 1pm with a buffet lunch, a display from various user groups, picture quiz and live music. Everyone is welcome. Happy Days afternoon drop in is every third Wednesday of the month from 12.30pm until 3pm. Come along and have cup of tea or coffee, share some of your memories, be inspired with a surprise package from Beamish Museum, where we also plan some visits this summer. Don't forget, Merton Hall is open for morning coffee, tea, and hot chocolate from Monday to Saturday from 9.30am until 11.15am. You can read the papers or magazines and have a cuppa with a refill for only 30p.

Pont Charity Group concert: October 11th

Pont Charity Group in keeping with their policy of presenting different style entertainment from concert to concert, have secured Rendezvous Jazz at the Britannia Hotel, Newcastle Airport on Saturday October 11th. If you were fortunate enough to attend the Military Wives Choir Concert earlier in the year, you can be assured that you will again have a most enjoyable evening and at the same time support the deserving charity, Children with Cancer. Doors open at 6pm and tickets costing £10 can be purchased at Mackley & Steven, 25 Main St, Ponteland.



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AWARD WINNING HAIRDRESSERS OPEN THEIR LATEST SALON IN PONTELAND

Award winning hairdresser Hooker & Young have opened a new salon in Ponteland.

Gary Hooker and Michael Young, (pictured) who opened their first salon in Gosforth in 1996 and have others in Jesmond, Darlington and Wynyard, have since won an array of prestigious awards including British Colourist of the Year, with both achieving Hall of Fame Status at the British Hairdressing Awards.

As well as hairdressing they will also be offering beauty treatments including oxygen facials, HD brows, LVL lashes and Essie nails from their new premises in Bell Villas.



Win family ticket to Knights' Tournament at Belsay Hall

We are offering in conjunction with English Heritage a free family ticket* to the Knights' Tournament at Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens on August Bank Holiday weekend.

To enter the draw, simply email: northmarketing@english-heritage.org.uk with your name, address and telephone number by 5pm on Friday August 15. The winner will be notified on Monday August 18.

To find out more about the event, taking place from 11am to 5pm on 23, 24, 25 August, visit: www.english-heritage.org.uk/belsay or see the advert on the back page.

* The ticket is for two adults and three children aged 5-15 years. Single use only. Not valid with any other promotion. Entries picked at random. English Heritage members have free entry to Belsay Hall, Castle & Gardens so need not apply.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Ponteland Summer Market

Start your summer at the latest special market in Northumberland, then make a day of it in the Ponteland area.

Ponteland summer market launches on Friday August 8th, offering an exciting range of locally sourced fresh produce, handmade goods and unique gift ideas for you to enjoy.

If you're looking for ideas to entertain the kids during the holidays turn a trip to the market into a fun-packed day out.

Why not grab some goodies for a tasty picnic on your way to a wild day out at Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens? Or stop off for some lunch on the journey home from a splash in the pool at Ponteland Leisure Centre? There's lots to see and do in and around the town centre!

The market will see up to 12 stalls trading on Merton Way from 9am-4pm, bringing an exciting element to shopping in the town for both local people and visitors.

The summer market will run on:

- Friday August 8th
- Friday August 15th
- Friday August 22nd
- Friday August 29th

The regular Friday market will continue to run each week from the start of September.

There's so much to do in our market towns across the county! Why not make a day of it in Ashington, Bedlington, Berwick, Blyth, Haltwhistle, Hexham, Morpeth and Prudhoe?

Find out more about Ponteland market, or any of Northumberland County Council's markets at: markets.northumberland.gov.uk

Start your summer here



MARKET DAYS

Fri 8th August

Fri 15th August

Fri 22nd August

Fri 29th August

For great food and goods, make a day of it at the...

Ponteland summer market

Merton Way, Ponteland, Friday, 9am — 4pm

Interested in trading at this market? Contact Keith.Gray@northumberland.gov.uk

NORTHUMBERLAND
Northumberland County Council

Find out how you can make a day of it in Ponteland, or see all your local markets at:
markets.northumberland.gov.uk



Ponteland Community High School Report

Charlotte strikes gold in Germany



Young showjumper Charlotte Ash produced a text book double clear to help the GB pony team to victory in Hagen, Germany, as part of the Nations Cup.

The GB pony team once again performed brilliantly and won gold on a perfect score of zero, with host team Germany winning silver, finishing on four faults, and France taking bronze finishing on 10 faults.

Charlotte's Head of Year Miss Tilley said: "We're all very proud of Charlotte but know that she is reaping the benefits of hard work and personal dedication."

Liam gets invite to national finals after scooping regional awards

Year 13 student Liam Fairbairn has been invited to the National Science and Engineering Competition Finals in Birmingham next year after winning a regional competition.

He won multiple prizes including The Gold Crest Award, Best Craft Award, and Engineering and Technology Runner-up at the annual Crest Awards Ceremony held at Northumbria University – and with them an invitation to the Big Bang Fair at the NEC next March.

Technology teacher Mr Shone said: "Liam is an exceptional young man and has shown high-level skills in his work, not to mention a great work ethic and attention to detail. We are all very proud of his achievements."

Ponteland High School received an invaluable donation from the Reece Foundation which has been used towards promoting science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities within school. Liam's success has been largely through the benefits of this additional funding.

A level students take lesson for middle schools

Five A level geography students recently ran a Year 8 geography transition lesson for both of our feeder middle schools.

Harriet Barrett, Ellen Forsyth, Simon Hirst, Rebecca Morris and Thomas Shield taught a geography lesson to a Year 8 class in both Ponteland and Richard Coates Middle Schools about the long term impact of peoples' action in regards to a sustainable future.

The students used a lesson based on the format of Doctor Who and students travelled through time to see the changes that have and could happen depending upon our use of the planet. The Middle School students really enjoyed the activities within the lesson and the feedback from the schools was very positive.

Ponteland High School Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "It is always lovely for our students to go back to their middle schools and help to promote a love of learning and this is exactly what this group has achieved. They are wonderful ambassadors for our school and we appreciate all they do."

Matthew collects young physicist award at Durham University ceremony

Year 12 student Matthew Ross was jointly awarded the School's Young Physicist of the Year Award for Ponteland High School at a prize ceremony at Durham University.

Year 10 student Dominic Burrin could not attend the evening due to being out of the country on a school trip to Paris, but was also awarded the prize.

The awards run each year by the Durham University Outreach Office in conjunction with the Ogden Trust. The purpose of the event is to promote studying physics at university and to celebrate outstanding physics students in local schools.

Both Matthew and Dominic are excellent students with inquisitive minds, a methodical approach to their studies and a real interest in the subject. Both have a bright future in science related professions and are worthy winners of the prize.





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Celebration weekend marks 50 years of Ponteland Girls' Brigade

Members old and new celebrated the 50th anniversary of Ponteland Girls' Brigade with a garden party and special service at the Methodist Church.

The 1st Ponteland Girls' Brigade was started in 1964 by Mrs Gladys McGarva and has worked ever since with girls and young women in Ponteland to give them new life skills and a place to grow and explore issues of life and faith.

The weekend celebration started on Saturday July 5th with an afternoon concert where girls sang, showed their new badge work and old members recalled events from the last 50 years.

They included Hilda Shell, who was there on the very first night in 1964 as a junior

member and later became captain, while another former captain Cheryl Hood travelled 300 miles from the Kyle of Lochalsh in north west Scotland to attend.

Presentations at the concert included a Queens Award – the brigade's highest possible accolade – for Olivia Hodson, 20, of Oaklands, Ponteland, who is studying Astro-Physics at Leeds University.

The garden party followed the concert in the church garden, and a family service and parade was held at the Church the following morning, where the dedication of Caroline Dodds - captain of the company for the last 13 years - was recognised. Caroline is stepping down and being replaced by Fiona Holmes.

Ponteland Girls' Brigade is open to all girls aged five to 18 and meets on a

Wednesday night at Ponteland Methodist Church. For more information please contact Captain Fiona Holmes at pontelandgb@hotmail.co.uk or on 07434 924898.



Olivia Hodson receives her Queen's Award from Katie Hurst, Commissioner for the Northumberland and Durham District. Photo by Trevor Walker.

Display items sought for WWI centenary exhibition



The Town Council is organising an exhibition of memorabilia, artefacts and information relating to any of the conflicts since the First World War.

The exhibition will be held in the lounge of the Memorial Hall and will run for a week leading up to Remembrance Sunday on November 9th. It will be open to the public from 10am until 4pm from Monday November 3rd to Friday November 7th and from 9am until 5pm on Saturday November 8th.

The Council is keen to hear from anyone who would like to display something at the exhibition during that time. It is intended to have photographs of any valuable artefacts or memorabilia from Monday to Friday with the option to display the real items on the

Saturday. This is for security reasons, as is the request please for no weapons to be exhibited.

Refreshments will be served on the Saturday and it is hoped that some veterans or their families may wish to come along and engage with those attending.

The Council need to ensure the exhibition is manned at all times and if anyone is prepared to do a two hour stint during the six days of opening that would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to display something, act as a steward or just want some additional information please contact the Town Council at enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk or on (01661) 825092.

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Garden party raises £800 for Newcastle United charity

A Ponteland couple hosted a garden party which raised £800 for Newcastle United Foundation.

Antony Clayton, from Middle Drive, Darras Hall, is taking part in the Great North Run for the Foundation in September and came up with the idea of a garden party fundraiser with his wife Carolyn.

Guests, young and old, tucked into sandwiches, cakes and cups of tea, before visiting an array of fundraising stalls.

Antony, a lifelong Newcastle United fan

said: "I have been really impressed with the Foundation's work in disadvantaged communities and wanted to do my bit to help. I have been blown away with how generous everybody was on the day. I cannot thank people enough for their support."

Sarah Medcalf, Development Manager, Newcastle United Foundation said: "I would like to thank Antony and Carolyn for all of their hard work in raising such a huge amount for the Magpie's official charity. We really appreciate such a sterling effort as we could not continue as a charity without the continued support of our local community."



Every penny raised from the Foundation's Great North Run team will help the charity reach its £1.5m annual fundraising target. Every year Newcastle United Foundation helps 50,000 disadvantaged children, young people and families across the North East, using the power of football to engage, inspire and motivate communities.

Farewell to a 'well respected and kindly member of the community'

By Muriel Sobo

Not quite two years ago Ella Pears won a prize in the Village Show for her decoupage framed picture! Just recently, she died peacefully aged 97 years and apart from war service her years were all spent in Ponteland Parish.

Born Ella Youngman at Berwick Hill in 1917, her father worked on field drainage. Her uncles were away fighting in the trenches and one of them didn't return. She was a pupil at the Council School and has an impish grin on a class photo which also shows her older sister, Sadie.

They walked from Berwick Hill with their sandwiches and bottle of tea for lunch; to school and back every day. Then they

moved to Twizell Cottage, a further two miles away. A single bike was shared till they could afford two.

Ella worked at Kirkley Hall as a kitchen maid and when her mother died the family moved to Ponteland and Ella looked after her father. She volunteered in 1941, joined the WAAF, worked in the kitchens, and was posted to places as far as Gloucester and Dumfries.

She wanted to be a driver but it only became possible later. She did her training and spent the rest of the war driving everything and everybody and finished on 3 ton trucks since most of the men were off for the D-Day invasion.

Ella married a long-time friend, Joe Pears, and they had one son. Joe died in 1990 but the family grew and there are three



grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

When school dinners were introduced they were brought in to the Council School ready cooked and Ella was one of the first dinner ladies but soon they had their own new kitchen. Ella was cooking again and worked at the village schools for a total of 15 years.

Her later years were busy with fine artistic creations and her last six years were spent at Grange Lea Care Home. A well respected and kindly member of the Ponteland community.

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MP Guy Opperman gets down to talk to Grange Lea resident Margaret Whaley. Bill Taylor and Ann Lewis are in the background.

MP impressed by visit to care home

By Muriel Sobo

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman made a visit to Grange Lea Care Home on National Care Home day last month.

Grange Lea has only 20 residents and the personal touch is provided by husband and wife team Dan and Joyce Whaley, who run it.

Ponteland councillor Richard Dodd accompanied the MP and both visitors were very impressed with what they saw. Richard described it as a gem!

Green Belt dinner raises over £1,700 for campaign funds

Opponents of green belt development raised £1,710 at a fundraising dinner at Darras Hall's Haveli restaurant.

The event, held on July 10th, included a champagne cocktail followed by a four course meal, generous raffle and a goodwill message from MP Guy Opperman.

One of the talented supporters made a novelty prize for the raffle - a clock based on the instantly recognisable 'Say No' campaign boards as the dial face - which was auctioned on the night.

A spokesperson for Ponteland Greenbelt Group, which will have its second birthday in September, said: "This event proved to be a fantastic evening, enjoyed by all and the food and service unbelievable.

"With the generosity of Haveli's, local businesses, donations and our supporters we raised the outstanding amount of £1,710. It was so nice to meet the supporters after previously communicating by email."

Mr Opperman's letter to the campaigners, read out on the night, said: "We forget at our peril that we are guardians of our land on which we live, and we must protect what precious green space we have around us.

"The prospect of losing huge swales of wildlife, farm land, hedgerows and green space under tonnes of concrete is one which we are right to be passionately opposed. We must stay strong in our fight against these large scale and unnecessary incursions into the green belt and you have my unwavering support."

Quacking day planned to mark 25th anniversary



Families enjoy last year's Duck Race. Photo by Trevor Walker.

Organisers of Ponteland's Duck Race are promising the 25th anniversary event at the end of August will be the biggest ever.

New additions this year include a local produce market with stalls and stands of food for sale, and five to 11-year-olds making their own boats to race on the River Pont.

Around 500 ducks will be used in five different races with a huge range of prizes to be won, with other activities and displays including a bouncy slide, hurdy gurdy organ, tombola, face-painting, cake stall and coconut shy.

The event, which also marks 50 years since Ponteland Rotary was established, takes place on Sunday August 31st at Ponteland Park from 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

Alan Hall, President of the Rotary Club of Ponteland which organises the Duck Race, has thanked local businesses and Ponteland High School for their "huge support" for this year's event.

All weather pitch build about to kick off

By Dr Caroline Pryer,
Headteacher, Ponteland Middle School

Work on the creation of a 9-a-side pitch at Ponteland Middle School will begin soon after a delay caused by newts!




The funding is fully in place, planning permission has been granted, and the contractor is ready to start.

But the school has had to apply to Natural England for a newt licence, after our Eco Team completed fencing repairs and a new newt hibernacula - part of the 'conditions of build'.

We will announce the completion date for the all weather pitch as soon as we have the final agreed starting date.

We are all very proud of what we have achieved with our funding partners, local community and Ponteland United FC. It has taken five years of PUFC's hard work and two years of Ponteland Middle School's involvement building up a business plan strong enough to support the needs of the local schools, community and clubs.

A very exciting project for our community!



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