

# pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Councillors order site visit  
for police hq scheme

.....  
Triple gold success in  
Northumbria In Bloom Awards

.....  
Ponteland plagued by  
unlicensed scrap dealers

**Flower Show is a  
growing success**



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CARPET AND FLOORING SPECIALISTS SINCE 1957





First three in the Build Your Own Boat race are Molly Storer (centre), Aimee Kelly (left) and Ruby Wilson.

Five year old Isobel Pete, winner of the first children's race.

# Record numbers raise £3,000 for charity at Duck Race

## Record numbers turned out for the 25th annual Duck Race at Ponteland Park.

Around 500 ducks were used in five different races with a range of prizes won, and a new addition this year was a boat race for children aged five to 13 who designed and manufactured their own vessels. This final race of the day was won by Molly Storer, nine.

Another new venture was the farmers' market where seven stall holders reported brisk trade. Other activities and displays included a bouncy slide, hurdy gurdy organ, tombola, face-painting, cake stall and coconut shy.

The event, held on Sunday August 31st, was organised by the Rotary Club of Ponteland. John Hancock, Chairman of the

International Committee, said: "Rotary are most grateful to the 46 local businesses and traders who sponsored our race day and in particular McCarthy and Stone our lead sponsor.

"We are indebted to the high school students who braved the cold water to ensure all the ducks reached the final line, to a team of young people from the middle school who provided a timely return of sacks of ducks to the start line, and to a team of scouts whose expertise and vigour ensured the safe construction of gazebos and a large marquee.

"All in all a day to be remembered. This year we raised at least £3,000 towards our annual contribution to international, national and local charities."

*Photos by Keith Robertson.*



# Councillors order site visit for police hq scheme

**County councillors have ordered a site visit before deciding on plans to redevelop the Northumbria Police HQ site with a 260-home scheme.**

Members of Northumberland County Council's west area planning committee had been recommended by officers to approve the plans at their meeting at Prospect House, Hexham, on September 17th. But they postponed the decision pending the site visit and to consider late submissions.

Up to 263 homes are set to be built on previously developed land on the 30-acre site, with only the offices of the Chief Officer Team and the Northern Communications Centre where all 999 and 101 calls are handled remaining, following a decision by the former Police Authority to relocate most services.

The development will include a mixture of 3, 4 and 5 bed semi-detached and detached homes. The existing police HQ access off North Road will be retained and listed buildings on the site and existing trees and hedgerows along the site's boundaries maintained.

Unveiling the scheme to the public in a roadshow held in February at Merton Hall, Northumbria Police said the scheme would avoid using greenfield land and reduce the pressure to release other undeveloped land in Ponteland.

There were objections from five residents, and the Environment Agency and the county council's Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems officer objected due to flood risk concerns. Ponteland Town Council said improvements would be required to the existing road infrastructure and the provision of medical facilities and schools.

Conditional outline planning permission had been recommended subject to the comments of the Environment Agency and the council's SUDS Officer on a revised flood risk assessment, and pending the completion of a Section 106 planning obligation to secure the following:

- Financial contribution of £150,000 towards traffic management
- Financial contribution of £300,000 towards public transport improvements over a five year period
- Financial contribution of £240,000 towards highway infrastructure
- Provision of 20% affordable housing on the site
- Public access to, and usage of, the grounds of the whole site including open grassed areas and wooded areas
- Preparation, approval and implementation of a nature conservation management plan.

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## HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Highways Working Party which met on August 27th had discussed the submission of requests to Northumberland County Council for capital items under the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2015-16. The suggested priorities were amended and it was agreed that the following, subject to public consultation should they be supported, would be sent to NCC:

- A package of dropped kerbs to include ten at Edge Hill, four on Thornhill Road and two on Darras Road
- Seven raised bus stops along the A696
- New footpaths to improve accessibility at Eastern Way (500 metres), The Rise (800m), Errington Road and Marian Way (550m), and Western Way (400m).

Three additional reserve items were also approved:

- Traffic calming – installation of speed cushions or chicanes on Western Way
- Installation of two streetlights on the footpath between Kirkley Drive and Meadowfield and four streetlights on Marian Way and also two lights to the link between Middle Drive and Parklands.
- New footpath at Marian Way to create a formal footpath link between Errington Road and The Rise.

## WAR REMEMBRANCE WORKING PARTY

The Council's War Remembrance Working Party met on August 21st and reported there had not been a huge response to the request for memorabilia and artefacts to display at the forthcoming exhibition. It was agreed that the exhibition would be scaled down and would now be held on Saturday November 8th and Sunday November 9th from 10am until 4pm. Tea and coffee will be available to all who attend the Remembrance Day Service on November 9th in the Memorial Hall when they could also take the opportunity to view the exhibition. The Town Council also agreed to fund production of a booklet written by Muriel Sobo which will be sold at the exhibition. The Council had considered a report in August about the possible addition of names to the War Memorial. A request for information about Private Joseph Davison had been included in the last edition of Pont News and an article had appeared in the Morpeth Herald. A relative of Private Davison had contacted the Town Council and she was not aware of him being commemorated anywhere. However, his name has been found on the war memorial in Newburn. This information will be given to the Memorial Hall Trustees, who have the final say on any additions.

## ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

A recommendation from the Working Party which had met on August 18th for the replacement of the open litter bin at Fox Covert Lane with a closed combined dog and litter bin was agreed. A similar bin will be placed in the meadow at Fox Covert.

## SUGGESTION FOR COUNCIL RECESS IN AUGUST

A recommendation for a summer recess during August in a report by two town councillors was considered but the Council agreed to continue with the present arrangement to have meetings 12 months of the year.

## MAYOR'S REPORT

### Rotary Duck Race

The Deputy Mayor attended the Duck Race event and reported it had been a great community day which had been well organised by Rotary and well attended.

### Attendance at Parish Liaison Group

The Mayor presented a report regarding his attendance at a meeting of the above group held at County Hall on September 4th with Northumberland County Councillors and officers and chairmen of other parish and town councils.

### Attendance at Ponteland High Schools Achievements event

The Mayor attended the above event held at the Falcons Rugby ground on September 4th and reported it was a most enjoyable and well organised evening.

*This report is based on the minutes of the Ponteland Town Council meeting held on September 10th.*

## WHITE MEDICAL GROUP

[www.whitemedicalgroup.gpsurgery.net](http://www.whitemedicalgroup.gpsurgery.net)

### FLU CLINICS

We are now taking bookings for our annual flu clinics. All of the following flu clinics are **by appointment only**. To book yours please phone any of our surgeries.

Venue: **Ponteland Primary Care Centre**

Dates: **Saturday 4th October** 8am – 11.30am  
**Saturday 8th November** 8am – 11.30am

Call: **01661 822222**

Venue: **Stamfordham Surgery**

Dates: **Wednesday 15th October** 9am – 12noon  
**Tuesday 21st October** 9am – 11.30am  
**Friday 7th November** 3pm – 5.30pm

Call: **01661 886587**

Venue: **Wylam Surgery**

Dates: **Monday 6th October** 9am – 11.30am  
**Thursday 23rd October** 3pm – 5.30pm  
**Wednesday 5th November** 9.30am – 12noon

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# Ponteland plagued by unlicensed scrap dealers



By PC Rob Anderson  
Ponteland Community Beat Manager

**In the period between August 15th and September 14th we have had six crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.**

These break down to the following offences:

- One theft from a motor vehicle
- One harassment restraining order
- One making off without payment
- One assault
- One theft
- One vehicle interference.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the outstanding offences.

Ponteland and the outlying areas are still being plagued by unwanted scrap dealers. In order for a scrap dealer to work in the county they must be in possession of a current licence which covers Northumberland. Therefore, if they have a Newcastle City Council licence it doesn't cover them to collect in the Ponteland area.

If you are dealing with scrap dealers please ask them for their licence and if they can't produce a valid certificate then they shouldn't be dealing in the area. They should always have the certificate with them when trading.

If you are concerned about scrap dealers coming into your street, take their vehicle registration number and please contact the police who will check out the details.

Please remember to alter the timer switches in your house as the nights start to draw in or leave a light on if you are going out.

I was asked to explain what our engagement days consist of so this is a brief explanation.

All of the available Neighbourhood Team members from East Tynedale converge on Ponteland for the given date to provide more visible cover. They are then given various tasks such as speed watch and community engagement to tackle issues which have been raised by members of the public.

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:

- SC Jon Grey Saturday October 4th  
10am - 11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- CSO Paul Cotterill Saturday October 11th  
9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson Friday October 24th  
11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway
- PC Lee Davison Saturday October 25th  
11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay village shop.

We also have engagement days at these venues and dates:

- Wednesday October 1st  
1pm to 3pm Stamfordham/Belsay/Matfen
- Wednesday October 22nd  
10am to 12noon Merton Way, Ponteland
- Wednesday October 22nd  
1pm to 3pm Broadway, Ponteland.

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



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# What's on...

## Ponteland U3A

Our speaker on Wednesday October 1st is Norman Dunn. His presentation is on 'The Music Halls of Yester Year'. We meet in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road at 2pm. Visitors welcome. No charge. For details of all our activities visit our website at [www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland) or ring the membership secretary on (01661) 822225.

## 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 October 4th.

## Charity Zumbathon

A charity Zumbathon® in Aid of the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society is being held on Saturday October 4th from 2pm to 4pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Come and dance with five local Zumba® instructors for a great afternoon in a great cause. Tickets £5 from Danny McDougall or Lindsey Thomson-Heley in class, call 07732 359399 or just come along on the day.

## Ponteland Photographic Society

Ponteland Photographic Society meets on Monday evenings at 7.30pm in Merton Hall. Come and see what we have to offer without any obligation to join, and do visit [pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk](http://pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk) or contact Secretary Brian Edlin on (01661) 820198.

## Ponteland Wildlife Group of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust

On Tuesday October 7th Tim Mason will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Wildlife in the Falklands' drawing on his 30 year experience working in the British Forces School on the islands. He retired as headmaster there in 2008. All are welcome to attend the meeting which starts at 7.30pm at St. Mary's Church Hall in the village. £2 per person including refreshments.

## 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.

## Ponteland Ramblers

Ponteland Ramblers have organised walks on the following dates in October: Sunday 12th from Beamish, and Sunday 26th from The Angel of the North. There will also be Wednesday walks on the 8th and 22nd (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.

## North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our guest speaker on Monday 13th October will be Angie Jones who will be talking about 'Bulb Propagation'. Angie has a diploma in horticulture and has worked in horticulture for 12 years. Her main interest was the propagation of bulbs and plants. At the meeting there will be a practical demonstration on the propagation of all sorts of bulbs. Our meeting takes place in St Marys Church Hall, Thornhill Rd, Ponteland and start at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome. Details from Terry Teal at [t.teal@btinternet.com](mailto:t.teal@btinternet.com) or (0191) 4132574. Our Autumn Flower Show is on Saturday October 11th in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland from 12noon-4pm with the plant sale open from 10.30am. Admission £2.50.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday October 13th is Reverend Peter Barham who will talk on 'Churches in Northumberland'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm.

## Ponteland WI

Our meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month - so the next one is October 14th. The programme is a talk and slide show given by Marjorie Goodchild on 'The story of a garden'. As lots of you will know Marjorie, you will also know we are in for a informative and entertaining evening. The competition will be a bunch of herbs. New members and visitors are encouraged.

## Ponteland Village WI

Tuesday October 14th at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall. Penny Pieces will be demonstrating various paint techniques that we can use at home, to personalise our homes. Their shop in Ponteland displays customised items, and quirky gifts.

## Bridge Drive

Prizes, raffle and afternoon tea at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Thursday October 16th - 1.30pm for 2pm in aid of Memorial Hall Funds. Tickets £8. Tel: (01661) 823398 or (01661) 822603.

## St Mary's Church events

On Sunday October 19th at 10am All Age Worship at St Mary's has the theme 'MOT needed'. All are welcome. A talk on 'Exploring Spirituality: Patriotism, pity and poetry, the poets of the First World War' led by Julie Barham takes place on Wednesday October 22nd at 11am and again at 7.30pm in the Church Hall Committee Room on Thornhill Road. On Sunday October 26th the service of Choral Communion at 10am will include an act of remembrance for 24 year old Lance Corporal John Wilkinson, who died on October 29th 1914 at the First Battle of Ypres. He was the first man from Ponteland to lose his life in the First World War.

## Ponteland Civic Society

At our meeting on Monday October 27th at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Marion Anderson will speak on 'Lord Eldon - 1751-1838'. John Scott, 1st Earl of Eldon, was born and educated in Newcastle, and became a barrister and politician who served twice as Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. Visitors are most welcome for whom there is a nominal fee of £2.

## United Reformed Church Christmas Fayre

Broadway, Darras Hall on Saturday November 8th from 10.30am - 2pm. Cakes, bric-a-brac, Christmas gifts and decorations, cards, bottle tombola, books, cds, toiletries, children's toys, pantry shelf, lunches, teas.

## Embroiderers' Guild Ponteland

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). Contact the secretary at [eg\\_ne\\_ponteland@btinternet.com](mailto:eg_ne_ponteland@btinternet.com) or on (01661) 881395.

## Belsay Carpet Bowls

Belsay Carpet Bowls meets in the Sir Stephen Middleton Memorial Hall at 6.45pm on Mondays and if anyone would like to join our very friendly club we would be pleased to see them. Telephone Aileen on 07803 542078 for further details.

## Searchlight

We are a group of Christians from the local churches who meet regularly to learn more about faith, and how it can help us live in today's world. Meeting on Thursday evenings in St. Mary's Church Hall from 7.30pm, until 9pm, we enjoy fellowship and friendship in an informal atmosphere. For more information, contact David Butler on (01661) 823664.

## Ponteland Creative Arts Group

We are a small and friendly support group for those affected by mental illness, their carers and family members. We meet in the Memorial Hall every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30pm to 3.30pm to enjoy creative activities, try new things, socialise, share support and build confidence. For further information please contact Emma or Sarah on 07507 453144, email [pontelandartsgroup@rethink.org](mailto:pontelandartsgroup@rethink.org) or just come along to the next session.



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| <b>MURGH MALAI TIKKA</b>  | <b>5.95</b> |
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| <b>MURGH HARYALI</b>  | <b>6.75</b> |
| Chicken breast marinated with fresh green herbs served with mango mint chutney                    |             |
| <b>SEEKH GILAFI</b>   | <b>5.95</b> |
| Char grilled lamb mince seekh with pepper & caramelised onion                                     |             |
| <b>MAHI TIKKI</b>   | <b>6.25</b> |
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# Your letters

The Editor  
Dont News & Views



## Unhappy Thornhill Road residents air their concerns in this month's letters...

### Thornhill Road is being neglected

#### Can I ask what is happening with the library area?

The Main Street and old Coates Green are beautifully kept, but turn left onto Thornhill Road and the communal areas are a disgrace.

The pear tree - an integral part of my childhood - is gone; what happened there? The librarian told me when I asked it was apparently diseased; it looked fit and healthy to me one week then just a disgusting stump the next.

I wonder if the fate of this area is as the school - another over priced retirement development? Whoever is responsible for spending my annual parish council fee please can you not see Ponteland village consists of more than the Main Street, park entrance and Coates Green - can it all not look nice?

I want to feel proud of where I live but unfortunately it feels like only certain parts of Ponteland seem to get my money spent on them and Thornhill Road is not one of them.

**Julie Milburn**  
Thornhill Road, Ponteland

### Reader echoes council plea for residents to trim back hedges

I read with interest the small article in the September issue about maintain your trees and hedges showing the minimum clearance that should be maintained.

**November issue deadlines:** Delivery of the November issue will start on Thursday October 30th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday October 13th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the November issue.

I immediately checked our hedges to the edge of the kerb and they were fine but how I wish other people would do the same - there are many streets where you literally have to step off the pavement on to the road because of overgrown conifer hedges - it is impossible to walk along the pavement.

I ask residents to at least trim them back to make it safe especially for parents with children in buggies, runners, dog walkers etc.

**Kathleen Hudspith**  
Wentworth Court, Ponteland

### Council gardeners deserve special mention

I am a local Ponteland resident and I think two men called Michael Champion and Ian Clough need acclaim for diligently maintaining the flora and fauna round the village.

I have seen them at all hours toiling relentlessly, keeping the village looking pretty for all of us to enjoy. They need a pat on their shoulders and a special mention in your publication, in my opinion.

**Bhavna Giffin**  
Rowan Drive, Ponteland

### Have you lost a bracelet?

I am looking to reunite with its owner a ladies' bracelet I found outside the Ponteland Waitrose store one Sunday last month.

Anyone wishing to claim it should contact me on (01661) 822015 to arrange an appointment at our Ponteland office.

**Gregg Strettle**  
Strettle Memorials  
15 West Road, Ponteland

### Mother allowing kids to play football in front of our homes is selfish

I am writing in response to Mrs Lai Spratt's letter 'Children playing football are doing no harm to anybody' (September issue).

As a pensioner living on Thornhill Road I have seen many things - footballs hitting doors, windows and cars and a few near misses when the ball goes on the road.

Mrs Spratt's letter is complete nonsense. She says she is going to continue to let her kids play on the green in front of our houses. Mrs Spratt lives in Elmwood Drive and says 'we don't let them play after 11pm'. Six to nine years old and unsupervised - ridiculous.

I think Mrs Spratt's view is very narrow-minded and selfish and she doesn't seem to care about the residents around the green. However, the council should provide a place where it is safe for kids to play football.

**Thornhill Road resident**

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.



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# What's in a name?

Driving down Main Street in Ponteland you might be forgiven for thinking there's a new opticians in town - Geoff Steven & Sons, with its bright new fascia and signs. However, Mark Steven and staff have been working alongside Neil Mackley for some years until Neil's retirement earlier this year. Since then, Mark continues to provide outstanding personal service to customers.

When I interviewed Mark Steven recently he said: "Our grandfather started the practice in 1946 with 'state of the art' equipment of the day, establishing a precedent that our father, Geoff, and my brother Chris and I have continued so we can provide the best possible eyecare and eyewear for all our patients."

I asked Mark about the equipment they have in the Ponteland practice and in particular the retinal camera. Mark said: "Patients are amazed at the photos of the inside of their eyes when I show them on the screen. Many eye conditions change quite subtly. The camera allows me to compare images from one visit to the next so it is easier to detect those subtle changes."

The autophoropter is like a big computerised pair of glasses put in front

of the patient's eyes. This interacts with the computerised Nidek test chart. It provides much more accurate results that benefit patients."

"The i-terminal takes a digital image of the patient wearing their new frame. The image is then enlarged by computer and measurements can be accurately taken to the nearest 0.1 of a millimetre. You can't be that accurate with a ruler! The measurements are so accurate that

that and reordered the same lenses with the same prescription. She was delighted with the result."

Mark continued: "Our new auto lens meter automatically measures the power of spectacles. Anyone in the practice can check the accuracy of the glasses received from the laboratory as well as customers' old glasses before the examination so I know what a patient is wearing.

**The measurements are so accurate that varifocal lenses perform much better, resulting in wider fields of clear vision."**

varifocal lenses perform much better, resulting in wider fields of clear vision."

Mark told me about one of his patients: "A few years ago when I took the measurements by hand, the lady opted for top of the range varifocals. When her husband came in for a test at a later date I asked them how they were. She said they were good but not as good as she was expecting. I had an i-terminal on loan so I took some measurements on

**I concluded that the new signage together with 'state of the art' digital equipment means that Geoff Steven & Sons really are focused on providing advanced eyecare for everyone.**



**Geoff Steven & Sons** have practices in Hexham, Haltwhistle and

**Ponteland**  
25 Main Street  
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# Super sporty Liv signed by Newcastle United

**A super sporty Ponteland teenager is celebrating after being signed by Newcastle United Women's FC.**

Olivia Rodda, 16, trialled for Newcastle United Foundation's Centre of Excellence aged nine and has been progressing through the club's Foundation Development ranks since, while playing in the Russell Foster league and representing her school at county level.

NUWFC play in the FA Premier League and are pushing for promotion to the Women's Super League.

The NUFC season ticket holder has been hooked on football since she was six years old, performing ball 'boy' duties at St James' Park at NUFC first team home games in the Premier League on several occasions and for the Olympic International football matches hosted there in 2012.

She also plays tennis and has represented Northumberland County making it through to the national junior 'Road to Wimbledon' finals at Wimbledon in 2012. She has also represented Northumberland County as team captain at golf and is a member of Ponteland Golf Club.

Olivia is a student at St Thomas More (Blaydon), having previously attended Ponteland First and Ponteland Middle

schools, and this year achieved 6 A\* and 5 A grades in her GCSEs and hopes to continue her sports career.

She is currently looking for new sponsors who may be interested in promoting their businesses either as a season-long 'shirt' and player sponsor or for individual match packages.

Olivia, who lives with her proud parents Tony and Deborah and two footy mad brothers in Rivermede, Ponteland, said: "Being signed by my home team is a dream come true and the biggest challenge of all my sporting activities by far, but it's just the start of a long journey. With a bit of help I know I can succeed and be a regular first team player in the top flight."

Anyone interested in sponsoring Olivia should contact Robin Palmer of Newcastle United WFC PR department on 07801 290638.



## Hall packed for Military Wives charity concert

*By Muriel Sobo*

**Ponteland people filled the Memorial Hall in May for the Concert by the Military Wives of Dishforth.**

We had a great evening of diverse and beautiful singing provided by the inspiration of Bruce Grant and his Charity Group.

He has continued to raise money and Jim Robertson, also of the Charity Group, handed over a cheque for £455 to Caroline Pryor of the local Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Association. This made a grand total of £4,317 for SSAFA. A great effort by all!



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## Growers produce the goods despite warm summer

**One of the warmest summers on record did not put off the gardeners of Ponteland, who once again produced the goods at the annual Parish Flower Show.**

Among the 130 classes displayed at the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 13th were entries in the flowers, fruit and vegetables, children, cookery, handicrafts, wine, art and photography categories.

There were entries in every class for leeks and onions for Ponteland Memorial Hall Leek Club, which joined the Parish Flower Show last year.

Chairman Syd Cowan said: "The show went very well. We had a lovely fine day and that attracted a bigger crowd than normal. With one of the warmest years on record, everything came early but we still had a very good show of vegetables, fruit and flowers.

"We also had an excellent entry to the children's classes – it took two hours to complete the judging – and a new carving group saw a big increase in woodwork entries."

For a full list of the results visit: <http://pontelandonline.co.uk>

Middle left: Sisters Hannah and Phoebe Burton of Ponteland who got second prize and highly commended in the children's crafts class. Photos by Trevor Walker



# Ponteland Community High School Report

## Great GCSE results mirror A level success

**There was more good news for students at Ponteland High School as the GCSE results mirrored the success of A levels with high grades, bucking the regional and national trend.**

This year 72% of GCSE students have gained five A\*-C grades including English and Maths and 15% gained A\* or A grades in seven or more GCSEs, with 18 students getting A\* or A grades in all their GCSEs.

The roll of honour is: Elliot Barker; Charlie Bell; Amy Blackley; Joe Burrin; Philippa Chambers; Georgina Hazon; Molly Hall; Lauren Hindmarch; Sasha Hodges; Georgina Kwok; Dan Potter; Sophie Reay; Adam Short; Olivia Taylor and Katie Thirwell. Special mention goes to Andrew Macgowan, Lucy McKenna and Matthew Quigley who gained all A\* grades.

Once again, there were some outstanding individual performances including Ben Eggleston and George Hunter who studied Mandarin as an extra-curricular course and achieved an A\* in GCSE Chinese, while talented musicians Rebekah Dale, Michael Dwyer, Brent March, James Mole and Chris Newton all gained either A\* or A grades in GCSE Music.

An impressive 25 per cent of all A Level entries were awarded A\* to A grades and approximately 50 per cent of results ranged from A\* to B. There was an overall pass rate (A\* to E) of 98 per cent, with many successful students going straight off to university.

Ponteland High headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "We are very pleased with this set of results. Our students, supported by their teachers and parents, have achieved very high standards and I hope this will spur them on to further success in years to come."

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See the school website

**[www.ponthigh.org.uk](http://www.ponthigh.org.uk)**

or contact us for more details:

tel. **01661 824711** ext. 201

As a school we are continually working hard for our students to be happy, feel safe and secure, and achieve exceptionally well.

## If you go down to the woods today...

*By Alex Elliott-Smith*



**There was an exciting start to the autumn term for the newest pupils of Ponteland High School when each year 9 tutor group visited Plessey Woods Country Park with their form tutor.**

Each tutor group worked together on teambuilding exercises and activities designed to help students make new friends and get to know each other better. They included synchronised plank stepping, working together to undo human knots and moving as a team using pipes.

Staff were impressed with the positive attitudes shown. Students arrived ready to join in and, after a day packed with new challenges, left tired but happy to have taken part and feeling ready to begin their new school year.

India Fenwick of 9ARC said: "I enjoyed every second of it. The best bit for me and the hardest challenge was perhaps the activity involving the wooden planks and the crates. You have to really listen to each other. I hope this will help me to have better friendships because now I feel more secure in school."

Activity leader Ian Hopper was very impressed with students and said: "As a year group they were unfailingly polite, pleasant, co-operative, friendly and well behaved – as well as being incredibly motivated! I must also have heard the words please and thank you, literally hundreds of times."

Well done to everyone involved for making such a good impression.



# Kate's Kilimanjaro climb kiboshed after travel firm collapse

**A university student's Mount Kilimanjaro charity climb was cancelled after the travel firm organising the week long expedition went bust.**

Last month Pont News reported how Kate Fisher had raised almost £3,000 for research into meningitis and was set to tackle the Tanzanian peak on September 4th.

Kate, of Edge Hill, Darras Hall, was just 11 when she was admitted to hospital for tests by doctors who feared she had the deadly disease. Fortunately the results were all negative and she made a full recovery from her symptoms.

Now 19, Kate is studying Neuroscience at the University of Nottingham and had decided to raise awareness into the condition – an inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord which can strike suddenly and kill in just hours.

Her fundraising efforts included travelling to five UK cities to undertake street collections, pub quizzes, car boot sales, a bake sale at Ponteland High School and two meal events at the Rendezvous

in Ponteland. Raffle prizes were kindly donated by local companies.

But on August 28th as the first Nottingham University group was in Gatwick Airport on route to Tanzania, news broke that trip organiser GBCE Ltd, operating as Student Adventures, had ceased trading and cancelled all of its services.

Along with dozens of other devastated students, Kate was forced to cancel her trip as no arrangements had been made following arrival in the East African country.

Writing on her Justgiving page Kate said: "I cannot express the anger and disappointment I am feeling right now after the amount of time and money I myself and everyone who has supported me over the past 11 months have invested into achieving my dream of climbing Kili whilst also raising money for the Meningitis Research Foundation. I am gutted.

"However, at the end of every big disaster there's still a silver lining. All money on this page (nearly £3000!) is safe with MRF and at the end of the day the people who need the money most will be getting it and that's what counts."



Undeterred, Kate and eight colleagues decided instead to do the 25-mile Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge on September 9th - Pen-y-Ghent (691m), Wharfedale (728m) and Ingleborough (723m).

Kate added: "It may not have been as challenging or impressive as Kili but it was still hard! Plus the views are beautiful - I'd definitely recommend it to people. We completed the challenge in 11 hours and 20 minutes."

If any readers would still like to donate to her appeal than can do so via <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/FisherKate1>

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## New Care Advice Service launched

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**A new care advice service is to be offered  
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The Diagonal Alternatives team will be at Merton Hall on the second Thursday of every month.

We will be delighted to meet you, have a coffee, and discuss any aspect of home care, and how we may be able to assist you or your family.

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## News from Darras Hall Estate Committee

By Andrew Mate

Joint Chairman, Darras Hall Estate Committee

### In an article in the June issue of Pont News I pledged to improve communication with owners following some valid criticism of the estate committee.

This is the first in a series of columns I am writing for the magazine to keep residents up to date with our work, alongside other communication activity including a new website currently being developed.

I was voted in as a committee member at the AGM in March, and at the vote at the committee meeting the following week it was a dead heat between me and my colleague David Gambles for the post of chairman so we have agreed to share the role for 12 months.

I have summarised the work of the estate committee, ably executed by Dawn and the office staff, since then below.

#### April

Election of officers, including seven newly appointed committee members.

Committee agreed joint appointment of David Gambles and Andrew Mate as Acting Chairmen.

Discussion took place between

Committee Representatives and Pont News & Views regarding publication of Estate matters.

Agreement that the committee website is redesigned.

Northumberland County Council commenced with pruning work on Bridlepath.

Planning applications approved – 5; deferred – 6.

#### May

Bridlepath extension at end of Western Way approved, making a direct link between the western end of the Bridlepath and the existing public Bridlepath, removing the need for path users to travel up The Crescent.

Planning applications approved – 17; deferred – 5.

#### June

Planning applications approved – 19; deferred – 2.

#### July

Planning applications approved – 5; deferred – 2.

#### August

Grasslands cut due to take place late August/early September.

Planning applications approved – 10; deferred – 3; rejected 1.

### New website

I would welcome feedback from residents on the suggested content and features for the new estate committee website, to include an owners only log-in area enabling owners to submit planning proposal submissions, minutes of meetings and other estate business, and a Q&A forum.

Public features proposed include an estate history, profiles of committee members, byelaws, news and events listings, residents' renovation projects, local business/tradesmen database, links to other local services and a Darras homemaker blog with invited experts' and residents' ideas and designs for interior and exterior home improvements.

The committee will endeavour to produce regular updates in Pont News & Views, at least until such time as our new website is live. I hope you've found this, my first effort to communicate with you all, of interest.

The Estate Committee can be contacted at [enquiries@darras-hall.net](mailto:enquiries@darras-hall.net) or on (01661) 825750. Opening hours are 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm Mon to Wed.

## Advertising platform for luxury housing scheme given temporary approval

**A developer who sparked anger after building a 65ft long viewing platform with illuminated advertising hoardings to promote a luxury housing scheme in Darras Hall has been granted retrospective planning permission.**

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

Darras Hall Estate Committee expressed concerns that the temporary wooden decked structure could cause traffic congestion and pose a safety risk. Objections also came from Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Civic Society and angry homeowners in Runnymede Road, Willow Way, High View and Beech Court.

An objector from Runnymede Road wrote: "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 had initially 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.

But after Lugano agreed changes including adding a post and rail fence to discourage cars from stopping at the site and to prevent access onto the platform and a Perspex screen into the window opening, and removal of the proposed illumination from the hoarding, officers recommended temporary approval until March 31 2015.

Members of the county council's west area planning committee granted retrospective temporary planning permission at their meeting on September 17th.

A spokesperson for Lugano had said back in July: "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."





Celebrating three years: Kevin Higgins and Richard Winter

# All smiles as pioneering practice celebrates third anniversary

**A pioneering dental practice which is proving to be a growing business success story for Ponteland celebrates its third anniversary this month.**

Kevin Higgins and Richard Winter took over an established dental practice in October 2011 and have since overseen a major renovation programme.

A significant investment saw an extension and refurbishment of the premises on Bell Villas which brought new state-of-the-art surgeries using the latest technology to offer a wide range of treatments. As a result patients can access a whole range of services all under one roof.

They include:

- Dental implants provided by an experienced team
- Full arch dental solutions including 'Teeth in a Day' or 'Same Day Teeth'
- Adult cosmetic braces (Invisalign, Six Month Smiles, Inman aligner)
- Facial aesthetics and skin rejuvenation procedures
- On-site 3D diagnostic scanning facility.

Higgins & Winter, which recently received an excellent report from the Care Quality Commission after an unannounced inspection, operates to the highest standards. It is:

- Highly commended for patient communication and treatment choices
- The only practice in Northumberland registered with IHAS - the 'Treatments

You Can Trust' scheme backed by the Department of Health for non-surgical cosmetic procedures (facial rejuvenation and wrinkle relaxation injections)

- Highly commended for a team approach and staff friendliness
- The only registered provider of Six Month Smiles and Invisalign in this area.

The investment by Kevin and Richard has been rewarded by a large increase in patient numbers since they took over, the vast majority coming from personal recommendations.

Seven jobs have been created, including a dental hygienist concentrating on preventative treatments, a third dentist, and numerous support staff and nurses. They are also proud to boast the services of several specialists, including Consultant Maxillo-Facial Surgeon Dr Rob Banks. This means that the practice can provide a wide range of specialist services without the need for referrals away from the area.

Kevin, who has been a dentist for more than 20 years and has a special interest in implant and cosmetic dentistry, said: "It has been a fantastic three years. There is huge job satisfaction and real pride in creating a bespoke practice that reflects the type of dentistry that we want to

provide with five star care."

Higgins & Winter is dedicated to supporting the Ponteland and Darras Hall communities. It is increasingly involved in many local causes and is a sponsor of Ponteland Golf Club, the Rugby Club, Triathlon Club and also supported the Party in the Park event during the summer.

Richard, whose 20 years in practice have included a spell as lead dentist on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, has a special interest in restorative dentistry. He said: "Personal highlights have included seeing the building work completed last year and Kev and I nearly killing ourselves in the wheelbarrow race!

"But seeing the results of hard work and being thanked by patients is a daily highlight in itself."

Looking ahead, Richard added: "We intend to continue to do what we do best - providing high quality treatment in a relaxed and inviting atmosphere with a great team whilst keeping in touch with the latest techniques and treatments."

For a no obligation consultation contact:

**(01661) 872979**

**[higginsandwinterdental.com](http://higginsandwinterdental.com)**

**[info@higginsandwinterdental.com](mailto:info@higginsandwinterdental.com)**

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## TAYLOR'S PHARMACY

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# Relief from dryness



### Have you or a loved one ever suffered from dry eyes?

One in ten adults will endure stinging, red, gritty eyes in their lifetime. The problem is made worse by air conditioning, artificial lights, contact lenses, medicines and air-born pollutants. Common remedies involve synthetic medication such as eye drops.

Dry mouth is another ailment that can blight up to forty percent of adults, especially as they age or if they use medication. Perhaps worse still, declining oestrogen levels cause intimate dryness in almost half of all mature women. They often suffer in silence, struggling with invasive, topical treatments.

So, what connects dry eyes, dry mouths and intimate dryness? **Mucous membranes.** Any area of the body exposed to the atmosphere needs the protection given by these membranes, including the eyes, mouth, skin digestive and urogenital tracts. Mucosa form a vital barrier against pathogens and infections. Sadly, as is often the way, our body becomes less effective at maintaining mucous membranes as we get older.

Omega-7 fatty acids (palmitoleic and cis-vaccenic acids) are responsible for maintaining healthy mucous membranes and if we get enough from our diet, we may be able to avoid or improve some of these debilitating dryness problems.

One person who has benefited directly from sea buckthorn oil supplements is the well-known model and actress Linda Lusardi. She suffered from dry eyes for over ten years, which affected her confidence when modelling and on TV. She had relied on messy eye drops every day until she found sea buckthorn capsules. Linda is enthusiastic about her new discovery. "A nutritionist friend introduced me to sea buckthorn

oil and it's been life changing. I took two capsules twice a day and felt an improvement very quickly. I've been able to give up the drops and I love the fact that it benefits so many other areas of the body."

Linda Lusardi



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Sea buckthorn berries are very rich in vitamins and have been used in Asian traditional medicine for hundreds of years. The berries grow wild in the Himalayas and along the shores of the Bothnian Sea both in Sweden and in Finland, where research on sea buckthorn has been carried out intensely for many years. Sea buckthorn berries are a vegan source of several essential fatty acids, including omegas 3, 6, 7 and 9 as well as over 200 bioactive compounds.

High quality sea buckthorn products contain all the aforementioned

nutrients, which enhance the regeneration of dry, sensitive and frail mucous membranes in both women and men. The oil, if carefully extracted, also contains natural antioxidants and phytosterols. If you're one of the thousands of people just like Linda, who are keen to tackle nagging dryness issues naturally, then the answer may lie in this tiny, ancient, orange berry.



Jessica and the team at Taylor's Pharmacy offer a free nutrition advice service and work in partnership with Pharma Nord UK, based in Morpeth, one of the UK's leading manufacturers of vitamins, minerals and food supplements. Why not pop into the store for a chat or call us on 01661 822055 and we'll do our best to help you.



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# Floral displays win hat-trick of gold medals

**The team behind Ponteland's Northumbria in Bloom bid is celebrating a hat-trick of gold medals.**

For the third year running we have secured the coveted gold award in the Small Towns category, along with golds for Ponteland Bowling Green and Tennis Courts in the Sports Grounds section and Athol House in the Care/Residential/Convalescent Homes, Day Centres and Hospices class.

The fourth award went to the Diamond Inn, which scored silver in the Public Houses & Hotels category.

Ponteland was one of 60 villages, towns and cities visited by Northumbria in Bloom judges in the spring and summer. The 50th anniversary awards were held in a ceremony in the Brandling Suite, High Gosforth Park, Newcastle on September 16th.



A floral display on Main Street. Picture by Brian Edlin of Ponteland Photographic Society.

Thanks to the Town Council's contractors Iain, Michael and Jim who have worked extremely hard to make Ponteland look so

special this year. The Council reports it has received many positive comments from both residents and visitors.

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