

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Battle for Birney Hill gets personal at public inquiry

Darras Hall lawyer in shark tank charity challenge

Pont High student to pick up award from Education Secretary

Lads beat dads again as Wheelbarrow Race raises £800 for charity

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Chocolate Party

Friday 3rd April, 2pm-5pm

Come along to Kirkley Hall and
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special appearance from the Easter Bunny. (Suitable for ages 3-10)
Adults £8.50, Children £6.50 booking is essential.



Pirates & Princesses Day

Thursday 19th February 10am-4pm

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Record breaking lads beat dads again

The lads beat the dads for a fourth year running, setting a personal best time for Ponteland's New Year's Day Wheelbarrow Race.

Teenagers Dan Pybus and Oscar Redman finished in 6min 52sec, beating their previous record set in 2012. Andrew Pybus and Alan Redman, who had a five year winning streak before their sons' recent domination, took second place with 7min 16sec.

The event, organised by Ponteland 41 Club with support from Ponteland Rugby Club, takes place over a mile-long course which starts and ends at the Blackbird Inn, with a men's race, ladies' race, junior race and fancy dress barrow parade.

There were 20 teams in the men's race including Dave 'The Fridge' Taylor from Darras Hall, with Mary Lisle and Alison Dixon winning the ladies' race and Lucas Eaden and Will Scott taking first place in the junior event.

More than £800 was raised for MacMillan Cancer Support.

Photos by Nick Clark: www.nickclarkimaging.com



Winners Dan Pybus and Oscar Redman

Plans to release green belt land opposed at drop-in event

County council plans to release 280 acres of green belt land surrounding Ponteland for development have been given the thumbs down by residents at a consultation event.

The drop-in event, held at Ponteland Leisure Centre on January 14th to consult on the authority's 15-year planning blueprint, attracted 175 attendees.

The council's core strategy proposes the release for development of 202 acres by 2031 and a further 79 acres after that date. This includes 17 acres for housing (up to 640 homes), 138 acres for education, playing fields, leisure and open space, and 47 acres of previously developed land (the current site of leisure centre, education and fire station) for mixed use.

The land owned by developer Lugano at Birney Hill is not included.

The main issues raised at the event included:

- too much land proposed to be removed from the green belt

- no need to improve the education and leisure facilities if Newcastle children were stopped from attending Ponteland schools
- concern over the proposed line of the bypass and the impact of its development on flooding
- no need for affordable housing
- no need for employment land
- more development will ruin the character of Ponteland
- lack of GP provision
- lack of parking in the town centre
- town centre needs to be improved
- traffic congestion and the need for a bypass
- impact of more development on flooding.

The draft core strategy is subject to a three month consultation process which started on December 12th. A second drop in event is being held on Saturday January 31st from 10am to 3pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall.

But it has already been met with a hostile reaction from campaigners against green belt development.

MP Guy Opperman said: "This is an attack on the very character of Ponteland and Darras Hall... The amount of the land they want to strip out from the green belt is enough for 5,000 new houses. It is a terrifying prospect."

Coun Allan Hepple, NCC's Policy Board Member for Planning, Housing and Regeneration, responded: "We have identified that there is a need to release green belt land in some places where the current boundary prevents the sustainable growth of the settlement."

"Of the land proposed to be released from the green belt around Ponteland over the plan period to 2031, 56 hectares of the 82 hectares, so almost 70%, is identified for education, playing fields, leisure and open space. We need to be clear and reassure residents this will not include housing."

For more information on the proposals, visit:
northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy

Birney Hill public inquiry: pages 8-9

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PRESENTATION BY ASHLEY BROWN, SENIOR YOUTH SUPPORT WORKER, WEST AREA

Mr Brown attended to discuss a potential grant from the Town Council and present details of the offer of services for 2015-16. He stated that the current year had been very successful in terms of numbers and range of activities provided and he hoped the service could build on their success for next year. The Town Council included the sum of £5,500 in the 2015-16 budget for this service.

GRANTS

Darras Hall Estate Committee

The Council awarded the annual grant of £600 to Darras Hall Estate Committee to assist with costs for upkeep of the bridle path.

Support to continue operation of the Ponteland Hopper Bus

The Council had previously granted the sum of £1,000 over two years to support the Ponteland Hopper Bus. County councillor Veronica Jones, who was involved with the project, asked the Council to agree a further contribution of £1,000. The Council agreed to grant £500 in the current financial year and another £500 in 2015-16.

PROJECTS REPORT

Work is ongoing on the land survey and it is hoped this will be completed by the end of this financial year.

BUDGET 2015-16

The Council considered a draft budget for 2015-16, which represented a 2% increase on a Band D property from £66.91 this year to £68.25 in 2015-16. The Council agreed the budget and formally agreed to levy a precept request of £368,828 on the County Council. The Council also agreed a £1 increase across all allotment fees and an average of a 3% increase across the fees and charges in respect of Prestwick Cemetery. This followed a period of two years without any increase for these charges. It was noted

that the fees and charges may need to be further revised if the County Council increased its fees.

CORE STRATEGY

Councillors were reminded that the response to the Core Strategy was required by February 11th. It was agreed that comments would be submitted to the Clerk by January 26th and a special council meeting to agree the response would be held in the week beginning February 2nd. *See article on p4*

PUBLIC TOILETS

The Council had agreed to obtain quotations for a refurbishment of the public toilets in Thornhill Road to include three toilets with a new roof to be either pitched or flat depending on costs. A report included details of the quotes received from four companies with a range of options including reducing the number of toilets to two or one. It was agreed that the current provision of a combined gents/disabled and ladies toilets was working well and a further option was suggested which was to carry out refurbishment of the toilets as they were at the moment. A decision on the type of roof was also to be made. It was agreed that the various options including a refurbishment as suggested above would be examined and discussed by the Environment Working Party who would submit a recommendation to Council.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Highways Working Party had met on December 12th and the Council agreed its recommendation to raise the historic mileage sign located opposite the Meadowfield junction to match the height of other signs elsewhere. The Council also approved a recommendation to remodel the flower bed at the Thornhill Road car park, to include removing the vegetation and reinstating cracked brickwork and shortening of one side to allow for disabled access. This will be funded from contingencies.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Jones stated that the county council was undergoing a consultation exercise on its budget proposals and that concerns had been raised at the amount of investment in the south east of the county. She also reported on changes to the way subsidised bus services were going to be supported which could have an impact on local services, and highlighted changes to electoral registration which meant that individuals had to register instead of one person in the household registering everyone who lived in a property. This was an enormous task for the county council to undertake. Councillor Dodd reported that he had had a meeting with the officer responsible for car parks before Christmas and he was awaiting some further action in relation to the car park at the back of Merton Way.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor's Diary

A list of events and meetings attended by the Mayor during December was circulated to the council. The Mayor thanked those who had attended his Christmas Get Together on December 12th and he also referred to his attendance at the Wheelbarrow Race on January 1st which had been well attended.

REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Joyce Butcher reported on her attendance at the Airport Consultative Committee, Councillors Sue Johnson and Liz Thompson had attended a Leisure Centre Users Group and submitted a report on that meeting and Councillor Adam Shanley presented information relating to the Memorial Hall Executive Committee.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on January 14th.



Cold cars and parking problems

By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Neighbourhood Beat Manager



In the period between December 14th and January 16th we have had 14 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- Four thefts
- One theft from a shop
- One assault
- One burglary dwelling
- Two burglary other than dwellings
- One damage to property
- Two damage to a motor vehicles
- One theft from a motor vehicle
- One breach of harassment restraining order.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to these offences, with arrests having been made.

The freezing weather is back with us again so now is a good time to remind you of some cold related problems:

- Don't leave your car running at any time to defrost it while you go back

into the house for your breakfast or to collect something. An opportunist could take advantage and either steal your vehicle or any property in it.

- Keep your washer bottle topped up with screen wash.
- Leave plenty of time for your journey and be aware of the road conditions at all times.
- If the roads are particularly bad consider if your journey is really necessary.
- If you're going on a long journey make sure your car is full of fuel and have warm clothing in the vehicle in case of emergencies.

The children are back to school, which means we are inundated with parking complaints again.

The County Council Wardens will issue you with a ticket if you park where there are restrictions and unless you are exempt for any reason you will have to pay. Make sure you park completely on the road

and with no part of your vehicle on the pavement or grass verge.

The speed limit for Thornhill Road and streets leading off it is 20mph; please don't forget. The safety of the children is important and if it means you have to walk for 10 minutes from where you've parked your car so they get to school safely then it's worth it.

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 7th February 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay village shop
- PC Rob Anderson 21st February 10am - 11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson 21st February 11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway
- CSO Paul Cotterill 7th March 9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland.

Record warmth brings record new year blooms

By Muriel Sobo

Last year was officially the warmest on record since records began 350 years ago.

And the top ten warmest years have all been during this century. Is that climate change?

In Ponteland it is interesting to note that since 2000 there have already been three years of severe flooding. Is that climate change? This is quite contrary to the planners' dictum that applications should consider flooding as a once in a century event!

Rainfall over 40 inches causes severe flooding here. In 2000 there were 40.51 inches, in 2008 41.04 inches and in 2012 46.04 inches! This compares with an average rainfall this century of 33.35 inches (measurements courtesy of Syd Cowan).



Gorse in flower near Cheviot View

Another report gleaned from The Times (January 12th), states that there are ten times as many flowers in bloom this January – botanists found 368 – after the warmest year on record.

Records are being broken on many counts! On the same date I found without searching snowdrops, daisies and gorse in bloom on a short walk in Ponteland.





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Battle for Birney Hill gets personal

Insults were exchanged between the opposing sides fighting to secure a 82 hectare green belt site at the public inquiry into plans for a 280-home scheme at Birney Hill. Chris Jennings witnessed the opening salvos.

The stakes are high, so it is perhaps not surprising that the legal advocates for Tyneside developer Lugano, the local planning authority and green belt campaigners resorted to sniping at each other.

For Lugano, planning solicitor David Cooper described Northumberland County Council's strategic housing strategy as "absurd" and the

current supply of housing as "dire" and "atrocious".

Acting for the campaigners, barrister Peter Dixon accused Lugano of "hyperbole" – comparing their submissions to Hans Christian Anderson fable the Emperor's New Clothes.

Meanwhile barrister Simon Pickles, for the county council, attacked the developer's justification for building on the green belt

as "a complete misconception", saying Lugano had failed to "grasp the scale of impact and harm resulting from the proposal".

At the heart of the argument – and what the Secretary of State will have to decide on – is whether the developer can demonstrate that there are 'very special circumstances' which outweigh the harm caused by deleting 200 acres of green belt to make way for 280 new homes.

Mr Cooper told the inquiry Lugano were offering a "once in a lifetime opportunity" to create a 'garden suburb' designed by world renowned architect Sir Terry Farrell which would "rescue" neighbouring Darras Hall from a downward spiral which had taken grip physically, socially and economically.

Citing the economic benefits of creating high quality senior management housing, other advantages he listed included provision of 17.9 hectares of open space, 84 'affordable' homes on site and a £2m contribution to enable another 46 off site, a community farm, public transport improvements and a 14,000 sq ft employment hub.

"It is difficult to find a comparable case where the benefits are so substantial and the...harm so little," he said.



Simon Pickles, barrister for Northumberland County Council



Planning Inspector John Gray



Members of the public



Planning solicitor David Cooper, for Lugano

He also told the inquiry that three of the county council's original refusal reasons in October 2013, relating to archaeology, flood risk and noise, had now been removed leaving:

- inappropriate and inefficient development in the green belt
- demonstrable harm to the landscape character of the open countryside
- impact on the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Mr Cooper criticised the county council's "lack of urgency" in adopting its new core strategy – a long term planning blueprint currently under consultation – and lack of a five year supply of housing: "The housing figures are as bad as one can imagine...the figures are atrocious, the past figures are atrocious, the present figures are atrocious and the future figures are bound to be atrocious..."

He added that the council's overall housing strategy was "absurd", based on house building in unviable locations.

But Mr Pickles responded, quoting recent National Planning Policy Guidance from October which he said made clear that this was not a reason to allow green belt development: "Unmet housing need...is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the green

belt and other harm to constitute the justifying (of) inappropriate development on a site within the green belt."

Lugano's planning application had yielded 4,310 letters of opposition to the county council and 487 letters of support.

Mr Dixon, for Ponteland Green Belt Group, said he was representing 1,000 local people fighting to protect the green belt. Describing the masterplan for the site as "unexceptional" and "inappropriate to the site and its wider setting" he added: "The factors relied on by the appellant fall far short of what is needed to justify such a substantial incursion into the green belt and such substantial harm to the green belt."

And referring to the Emperor's New Clothes he said: "It will be recalled that in that case the Emperor's credentials did not withstand close scrutiny. This inquiry has to investigate whether the hyperbole lavished by the appellant on its own proposal are similarly misconceived."

Local MP Guy Opperman has been a fierce critic of the proposals, speaking against them in the House of Commons, and he addressed the public inquiry on day three.

Accusing Lugano of a "purely 'speculative' planning application...timed in...an attempt seeking to circumvent the democratic Local Plan process", Mr Opperman told the inquiry: "The community here in Ponteland and Darras Hall has united in a quite extraordinary way. United not against development; not against housing; but against unnecessary building in the green belt.

"If the applicants were to bring forward a well designed scheme, in line with the council's plan and with genuine community support I would more than happily consider it. But this I am afraid is not such an application.

"It is very simply an outline planning application for 280 houses in the green belt, contrary the council's current and emerging Local Plan, and against the wishes of local people."

Planning inspector John Gray is presiding, and will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State after considering the evidence he has heard. The hearing, being held at Newcastle Falcons rugby club in Kingston Park, started on January 13th and was scheduled to last ten days. It could be several months before a decision is announced.



Your letters

Concern about the future development of Ponteland and praise for the care shown by emergency services following a Darras Hall man's heart attack in this month's letters...

We don't want another development disaster in slow motion

According to the Draft Core Strategy, Northumberland County Council is proposing to demolish and rebuild the Leisure Centre and adjacent schools in order to build housing all along Callerton Lane.

The Civic Society (amongst others) has been aware of this idea for some time and is opposed to it – along with the removal of Green Belt status from land to the NE of Rotary Way.

PN&V (issue 112) also reports that £20m is budgeted for Ponteland and Hexham schools. In 2004 the price of just one school was about £30m.

On p6 we also learn that ARCH has sent a letter to PTC about the regeneration of Merton Way. However, a poll by the NPG indicated that most residents preferred refurbishment to rebuilding.

We would support any good, viable plan for Merton Way, but isn't it about time there was a bit of public consultation on this issue? The last plan was a disaster in slow motion and we don't want the same again.

Philip Ham
Chairman
Ponteland Civic Society

Emergency services deserve more praise

My husband and I would like to thank and let it be known how considerate and helpful PC Rob Anderson and Special Constable Jon Gray were when they arrived at our house following a 999 call as Ian was having a heart attack whilst fixing the exterior security light.

We are very grateful, not only for help received at the time, but subsequently when Rob called to see all was ok and completed the fixing of the security light for us.

Our police and ambulance services deserve more praise and we are more than grateful for their dedication and professionalism.

Marjorie and Ian Wilkinson
Avondale Road
Darras Hall

Charity's thanks to garden centre

Ponteland Lions Club is grateful to Dobbies for letting us hold a collection in the garden centre on Sunday December 14th.

We raised £197 for our charity account.

Everything we collected goes to good causes as we do not deduct expenses. We thank residents and the store for their continued support. The club appreciates it.

Frank Harrington
Ponteland Lions Club

March issue deadlines: Delivery of the March issue will start on Thursday February 27th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday February 9th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the March issue.

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.

PONT CHARITY GROUP DONATION

Despite the disappointing lack of support and subsequent cancellation of the Rendezvous Jazz Concert which had been planned for last October, the Group has however made a donation of £1,675 to the national charity Children with Cancer, from the proceeds of the raffle.

COME AND JOIN AUDIO BOOK CLUB

Are you vision impaired or do you know someone who is? Are you interested in joining an Audio Book Group in Ponteland Library?

Come along to a monthly meeting to discuss an audio book. Membership is FREE and the group meets on the first Monday of each month at 10.30am.

If you would love to try Zumba but think it may be too energetic for you why not try Zumba Gold. Lower impact, easy to follow Zumba rhythms whatever your level of fitness.

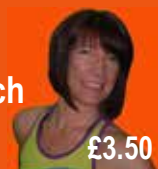


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What's on...

The Bridge

The Bridge is a relaxed, informal church service where everyone is welcome. We meet most Sundays in Ponteland Methodist Church Hall at 9.45am. We use contemporary music, visual media, personal stories and short talks to help us discover how the Christian faith is relevant to our lives today. We are family friendly with activities for kids up to Year 6. Services in February: 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd. For more info email us at thebridge.ponteland@gmail.com or phone (01661) 822057.

Ponteland Wildlife Group of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust

On Tuesday February 3rd following the AGM there will be two short talks by members 'Wish You Were Here - Greenland' by Mike Pearce and 'Birds of Darras Hall' by Chris Wright. As always, all are welcome to attend at St Mary's Church Hall in the village, starting promptly at 7.30pm. £2 including refreshments (traditionally on this our AGM evening we request that everyone brings a small food contribution to the buffet).

Ponteland U3A

Our next monthly meeting is our AGM. It is on Wednesday February 4th at 2pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road. Following this short AGM we will have entertainment and a faith tea. Visitors are always welcome. No charge is made. For details of our activities visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or come to a monthly meeting or phone (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 February 7th.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday February 9th is Mrs Lindsay Cross whose talk is entitled 'The West End Refugee Service'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm. Contact Secretary Brian Edlin on (01661) 820198.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday February 9th we are delighted to welcome our guest speaker John Mitchell, who will be talking about Alpines plants from his trips to Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. John is responsible for the Alpine Section at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Through his work he has travelled extensively to the mountains and the alpine areas of the world. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 4132574.

Weather presenter in talk at Kirkley Hall

The Friends of Kirkley Hall, the charity that supports students at Northumberland College's Kirkley Hall campus, is inviting members of the public to an illustrated talk by Hannah Bayman about her work at the BBC Weather Centre in Newcastle. The weather is a great talking point with everyone and this talk should prove to be extremely popular, so early booking is essential. It will start at 7pm Wednesday February 11th. Entry for each event costs £5pp and booking is essential. Contact the Chair of The Friends of Kirkley Hall, Brenda Parke, on (01661) 853489 or Jean Fellows-Pryne on (01661) 823423.

Kosova

Fundraising Ceilidh

Two members of 1st Ponteland Girls Brigade are partaking in a life changing week of mission in the summer to Kosova. A fundraising ceilidh and supper is taking place on Saturday February 21st from 7pm-10.30pm at Ponteland Methodist Church Hall. For ticket information please contact Sue Kirtley on 07732 127852.

Fairtrade Fortnight: Feb 21st to March 8th

For Fairtrade Fortnight 2015 in Ponteland we're going to celebrate the impact of Fairtrade and turn a spotlight on the producers who grow the products we love - cocoa, sugar, and tea, to remind everyone of the dramatic difference choosing Fairtrade makes and how much it is still needed. St Mary's will have a Fairtrade 'Big Brew' on Saturday February 21st from 10am to 12noon, Merton Hall will hold a Fairtrade Coffee Morning on Friday February 27th from 9am to 11am, the Methodist Church Fairtrade Open Door will be at 2pm on Monday

March 2nd and St Matthew's 'Big Brew' will be on Saturday March 7th from 10am to 12noon. All are welcome.

Ponteland Civic Society

Ponteland Civic Society is looking forward to starting the new season on Monday February 23rd in St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm with a talk about the Path Head Water Mill which will be given by Trevor Underwood. Trevor will describe the development of this heritage site and working museum with its restored and operational water wheel. As usual there is time for tea and a chat afterwards. There is a small charge of £2 for visitors, who are most welcome.

Ponteland Repertory Society panto

Ponteland Repertory Society is presenting a Panto - Dick Whittington & His Cat - written by Stephen Stokoe who is a member and is also playing the Dame! There will be six performances in Ponteland Memorial Hall from Tuesday February 24th to Saturday February 28th at 7pm each evening with a matinee performance at 2pm on Saturday. Tickets costing £8 for adults and £6 for children are now available online at www.pontelandrep.co.uk or from Ponteland Club, Merton Way.

Kirkley WI

Kirkley WI usually meets on the first Wednesday of every month in the Oak Room, Kirkley Hall, at 7pm. New members and visitors very welcome.

Ponteland WI

Our meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month. New members and visitors are encouraged.

Ponteland Village WI

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. New members and visitors are welcome for a girly night with a difference, for more information please contact us via email: pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or on our Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

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 or email pontelandartsgroup@rethink.org or just come along to the next session.

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.

Pont Badminton Club

Pont Badminton Club meets every Friday evening between 8.30pm to 10pm at Ponteland Leisure Centre. Adults of all ages will be assured of a warm welcome. Just come along or contact 07986 388822 for more information.

Line dancing

We meet every Wednesday at 7pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Our next term begins on Wednesday March 4th. We have lots of laughs, friendship and exercise to music. The cost is £20 for ten sessions. Dancing is at Beginner and Intermediate level. New dancers are always welcome, free taster session offered. Why not give it a try? Contact Rosemary Gray on (01661) 822493.

Pasadena Roof Orchestra performance

The Pasadena Roof Orchestra is performing on Sunday March 22nd at Newcastle Falcons Gold North Suite in support of CHUF. For more information contact Ponteland Charity Group on (01661) 823606.

Ponteland Beer Festival

The second annual Ponteland Beer Festival will be held at the Sports Centre on Friday April 24th and Saturday April 25th. Tickets can be purchased online at pontelandbeerfestival.co.uk



Ponteland Community High School Report

Charlotte crowned Young Sportswoman of the Year

Ponteland High School's Charlotte Ash is destined for great things.

She has had an amazing year that has included numerous competition wins, qualification for the British Masters and Horse of the Year Show as well as representing Great Britain across Europe, winning Team Gold in to the bargain.

Her list of achievements has now been recognised after she was named Young Sportswoman of the Year at the Sport Tynedale Annual Awards.

Charlotte has managed all her success whilst maintaining a strong commitment to her studies and much of the credit for this must go to her hugely supportive parents, who have been instrumental in supporting and guiding Charlotte through this busy time.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "Charlotte has had a fantastic run of success but has remained thoroughly modest throughout. If anyone ever deserved their success it is her, and we hope that she will continue to excel in all things in the years ahead."

Charlotte is pictured with her award with headteacher Kieran McGrane



Inspirational student to collect award from Education Secretary

Inspirational student Charlotte Burrin will collect a Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize runners-up award from Education Secretary Nicky Morgan in February.

This is the third time in the three years of the prestigious award, which recognises academic performance, civic contribution and a demonstrated interest in public service, that a Ponteland High School student has won a prize.

The annual award was established in memory of Lord Glenamara, formerly Ted Short, who was MP for Newcastle Central from 1951 until his retirement from the House of Commons in 1976. As a former teacher, he always had an interest in education and among his many roles served as Secretary of State for Education.

This year's award will be presented at University College London by the Education Secretary, after which Charlotte and her family will be able to talk to all participants and presenters and enjoy a guided tour of the university.

Nominations for the prize were invited from the 100+ secondary schools in the North East, and Charlotte had a very strong submission.

With a record of outstanding academic performance, she gained GCSE A* grades in all ten subjects, gaining full marks in her mathematics GCSE. At AS level, she achieved top grades in all the six subjects taken with full marks in modules in mathematics and biology.

On the more creative side, she has achieved grade 8 in the clarinet, which Charlotte puts to good use by being a member of the community band, school

band and school wind quintet.

Her sporting credentials include playing for Ponteland netball club and swimming three times a week for fitness and pleasure.

Charlotte is also well aware of the importance of public service. Nearing completion of her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, she works as a Kumon assistant in both mathematics and English offering support and guidance to younger students. In addition, she has been a reading coach to a year 9 student and is this year supporting a year 11 student in science. This in addition to her prefect duties.

Outside school, Charlotte is a patient representative at her local GP surgery which entails meeting every few months with head of practice to discuss how the surgery is run and how it can be improved. This involves some canvassing of opinions and hearing patient concerns.

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Ponteland Repertory Society
presents

Dick Whittington & his Cat

**Tuesday 24th – Saturday 28th
February 2015**

Evenings at 7pm plus
Saturday matinee at 2pm

The Memorial Hall
Darras Road, Ponteland

Tickets: £8 Adults. Children £6
(Under 16 yrs)

Available from
Ponteland Social Club
or online at
www.pontelandrep.co.uk



Lively panto to lift a dull February

By Deborah Barry

Join the youngsters of The Preppies and the members of Ponteland Repertory Society for a couple of hours of traditional fun and laughter as they take to the stage of the Memorial Hall for this year's pantomime, Dick Whittington and his Cat.

The show, which takes place from February 24th – 28th at Ponteland Memorial Hall, tells the rags to riches tale of a young man and his cat on an exciting quest for fame and fortune.

In true panto style, the evil King Rat strives to thwart his plans, Fairy Bowbells battles to save the day, and panto dame adds her own, unique sparkle to the proceedings.

Chairman of The Rep, Ted Henderson, said: "We are very happy that the pantomime gives us a chance to engage some of the children belonging to the young theatre group in a show. It's fun and lively, and it is a great opportunity for their families and friends to come along and see what they have been up to.

"Our last show in November commemorated WWI, so this is also a brilliant, bright contrast; the perfect outing to lift a dull February."

Tickets for the show (evenings at 6pm and a Saturday matinee at 2pm) can be purchased online at www.pontelandrep.co.uk or from Ponteland Social Club.

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Lawyer in charity shark dive

A Ponteland man is hoping the old joke about sharks not attacking lawyers out of professional courtesy comes true when he takes on a jaw-dropping charity challenge next month.

For Paul Clark is preparing to dive with Europe's largest collection of sharks to raise funds for the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign.

Paul, of Avondale Road, Darras Hall, will spend half an hour in a diving tank alongside up to 27 sharks, including sand tiger sharks measuring up to 10 feet long.

The 49-year-old father-of-two, practice manager at John Humble Legal Services in Hexham, is surprisingly unconcerned about the charity dive at Cheshire's Blue Planet Aquarium at Ellesmere Port on February 21st.



He said: "I know there will be 27 sharks in there but none of them are man eaters – and they feed them before you go in! I'm not worried about it; I won't come back without an arm or a leg."

Wife Sarah, who nominated Paul for the challenge due to his long term desire to take up scuba diving and swim with whales, joked after telling him about it she was 'just away to check the life insurance'.

And twin sons Tom and Will, 19, are scared stiff of sharks!

After the legal practice chose the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign as its charity for the year, Paul's colleague John Humble, 62, completed the 20-mile Chevy Chase fell run to raise over £1,100 last summer.

Paul, who used to run a youth club for handicapped children in Newcastle many years ago, said he was touched by meeting local parents of children with muscular dystrophy who know they will outlive them.

"I just wanted to give something back myself," he said.

Paul, who is working towards a Professional Association of Diving Instructors qualification, can be sponsored towards his £1,000 target online at justgiving.com/PA-Clark/

Former Ponteland schoolboy takes top job at new luxury hotel

A former Ponteland schoolboy has returned home to take charge of the new Crowne Plaza luxury hotel currently being built in Newcastle's Stephenson Quarter.

Andrew Fox, 48, has been appointed as general manager and will oversee the final phase of construction along with the fit-out, working closely with the property developer Clouston Group, while also recruiting his senior management team.

The father-of-four was brought up in Ponteland before leaving the area to study in Manchester and begin a career in hospitality.

His 25 years' experience in the hospitality and leisure industry include his most recent position as regional general manager for Q-Hotels, overseeing a collection of hotels in the Midlands. Prior to that he worked at Crowne Plaza Nottingham and within management in Marriott Hotels for eight years.

The new appointment represents an exciting challenge and a welcome return to the North East for Andrew, now living in Morpeth.

Billed as being set to become Newcastle's most luxurious and contemporary hotel when it opens in July, the seven-storey, 251-bed venue will add a major new business conferencing and banqueting facility to the city just south of central station.

Andrew said: "The development of Crowne Plaza in Newcastle is not only an exciting milestone for the city but represented a great personal opportunity. The chance to come back to the North East, the lifestyle of the city and the wider area, was too good to miss.



Newly appointed Crowne Plaza Newcastle general manager Andrew Fox

"I'm thrilled to be at the helm of such a significant project in Newcastle; a project that will breathe life into this part of the city, creating much needed investment, jobs and opportunity for the future.

"Crowne Plaza Newcastle will become an asset the city will be proud of and a beacon for the Stephenson Quarter and the wider business community."

The hotel will be under a management contract with InterContinental Hotels Group, which franchises, leases, manages or owns over 4,700 hotels and 697,000 guest rooms in nearly 100 countries.

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HEALTH UPDATE BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

TAYLOR'S PHARMACY
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Power up your heart with this new discovery

An energetic heart is the key to physical and mental well-being. Now you can take a capsule with a natural compound that restores the power in your body by giving your heart new strength.

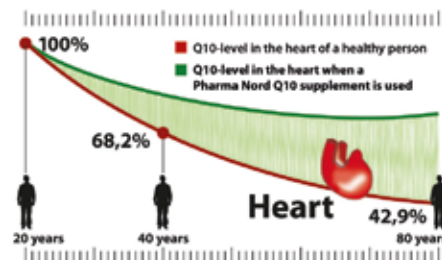
Given the choice, most of us would prefer to take a natural approach to our health, free from side effects. But we need to be sure we can make a real difference and can't afford to waste money.

So forget about black coffee and ginseng. Now, science has discovered a much better way to rejuvenate your body's energy supply. A natural compound that is available in small capsules could literally power up your heart muscle and make it pump with the same force as when you were much younger.

What is the secret?

The key is a vitamin-like compound called coenzyme Q10, which is something we humans produce ourselves (we also get a small amount from the food we eat). As we grow

older, our ability to produce our own coenzyme Q10 tapers off and one of the first parts of the body to be affected by this is the heart muscle. It can no longer contract with the same force and that is part of the explanation as to why our energy levels drop.



Once you reach your mid-twenties your Q10 levels naturally drop. Supplementation can compensate for the loss.

The key to energy

Coenzyme Q10 is a compound which all cells need in order to make energy. Without it we would not be able to survive. Even marginal reductions in Q10 levels affect us, but a supplement makes it possible for us to do something about it.

Used for chronic heart failure

Two rather recent studies have clearly



demonstrated the effect of taking Q10 daily. In a Danish study of over 400 patients with chronic heart failure (Q-Symbio), those who were given Q10 capsules had significantly improved heart function and only half as many cardiovascular complications as those who took identical "dummy pills". In addition, the survival rate among those taking Q10 was twice as high.

Excellent for older people

Another study that was conducted on 443 healthy, older (70-88 years of age) men and women showed that those who got daily supplements of a patented Q10 preparation (plus organic selenium, a trace element) had 54% fewer cardiovascular deaths and significantly improved heart function.

Q10 is a vitamin like substance which is taken as a food supplement. Q10 should be taken as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle. Here at Taylor's Pharmacy we specialise in advice on diet and lifestyle and we are always happy to guide you, ensuring you have all the tools you need to get the most out of your health.



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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.

Ponteland Rugby Club donates £1,500 to the 'Wooden Spoon'

Ponteland Rugby Club has donated £1,500 to a charity which funds projects for disabled and disadvantaged children and young people across the UK.

The cash was raised for Wooden Spoon at the club's Veterans' Dinner held at the County Thistle Hotel in Newcastle last summer.

Former England international Roger Uttley was guest speaker at the dinner, which also attracted members of regional rugby clubs including Novos, Gosforth, Morpeth, Alnwick and Hawick.

Wooden Spoon, the children's charity of rugby, has a fascinating history which stemmed from defeat on the rugby field and a tongue-in-cheek consolation prize.

It all began in 1983 after the final game of the Five Nations Championship when five England rugby supporters in a Dublin bar were presented by three Irish friends with a wooden spoon, wrapped in an Irish scarf on a silver platter as a memento of England's dismal season.

Accepting the gift with good humour and grace, the England fans resolved to hold a golf match to see who would have the honour of keeping the wooden spoon. Just a few months later the golf match was held and in the course of an entertaining day an astonishing sum of £8,450 was raised.



The money was used to provide a new minibus for a local special needs school, the first of more than 650 Wooden Spoon charitable projects in the three decades since.

Ponteland Rugby Club President Tony Murphy (centre) is pictured presenting the cheque for £1,500 to Anthony Stoker, Chairman of the Northumberland Branch of The Wooden Spoon. Also in the photograph are Daniel Whaley, Vice President of Ponteland Rugby Club, Richard Moller, Captain of Ponteland 1st XV and Alan Old, Secretary of The Northumberland Branch of The Wooden Spoon.

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