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D-day looms for green
belt campaigners

More new homes agreed
for Medburn

Schoolfriends head off
on Kosova mission

Record turnout for park party



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Fantastic weather attracts record crowds to park party

Fantastic weather attracted a record number of families to Ponteland's Party in the Park.

The tea tent ran out of cups and the BBQ sold out of burgers as an estimated 3,000 people packed the park on Sunday June 7th.

The Rev Hubert Jicha III from Philadelphia - on a ministerial exchange with Rev Tim Thorpe from Ponteland Methodist Church - opened the event, with the entertainment programme launched by Jill Errington's Dance School.

Other performers included Ponteland Community Band and Darras Hall First School Choir, who supported the family service led by the Vicar of Ponteland Rev Peter Barham.

Ron Wood's Punch and Judy show and an Army display vehicle proved popular new attractions, along with pony rides, a climbing wall, archery, a flight simulator, Kirkley Hall Zoo and an art & crafts tent.

This is the 13th year for the event, which is organised by a Ponteland Churches Together committee comprising St Mary's Church, St Matthew's RC Church, Ponteland Methodist Church and Ponteland United Reformed Church.

Organiser Andy Anderson said: "This was most successful Party in the Park so far. Over 2,400 people paid to get in, so probably over 3,000 people attended as children and stall holders get in free.

"Last year we estimated over 2,500 but this year was bigger. The weather was fantastic.

The BBQ sold out in spite of the increased number of burgers and the tea tent was as popular as ever and they ran out of cups!

"Darras Hall First School Choir were very good and helped with the family service led by Rev Barham, and Ponteland Community Band gave their usual excellent concert. Thanks to Newcastle International Airport and Ponteland Town Council for their support, to Ponteland Scouts for use of their hut and all people who helped set things up and take them down.

"All the churches very much enjoyed working together to create such a spectacular event."

Cover shot: Olivia Munro, aged three. Photos by Pat Walker.



Secretary of State decision on Birney Hill imminent

The eagerly awaited decision on the future of Birney Hill is due to be announced by the Secretary of State within the next two weeks.

And for both the developer Lugano Property Group and campaigners opposing its plans for a 280-home scheme on the green belt site neighbouring Darras Hall, it is an anxious wait for the government ruling following January's public inquiry.

The two week hearing, held at Newcastle Falcons rugby club in Kingston Park, was told an award of planning permission would unlock a £10.7m bonanza of community benefits.

They included: £3.6m for off-site affordable housing for rent; £1.63m for a 14,000 sq ft business hub; £1.6m for travel planning and a community bus service; £1.2m for schools and leisure; £1.2m for a community farm; and a £1m community fund. Other benefits highlighted were the provision of 17.9 hectares of open space and 84 'affordable' homes on site.

Both Northumberland County Council, which had refused planning permission, and Ponteland Green Belt Group, which



was representing 1,000 local people fighting to protect the green belt, said the scheme would cause "substantial harm" by inappropriateness, impact on the openness of the green belt and landscape character, and impact on the setting of three listed buildings.

Lugano argued the harm was outweighed by four reasons amounting to 'very special circumstances' – a crisis in housing land

supply, need to revitalise the regional economy, development of an exemplar garden suburb designed by world renowned architect Sir Terry Farrell and the very special location of the site.

The inquiry was chaired by planning inspector John Gray, whose recommendation is being considered by the Secretary of State. The decision is due to be announced by July 9.

Duchess presents Queen's Award to charity

A Northumberland charity with a Ponteland fundraising base has been presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

Volunteers from Tynedale Hospice at Home, which has a shop in Merton Road, received a certificate and commemorative crystal from the Duchess of Northumberland at a garden party at Alnwick Castle on June 18th.

The charity is supported by nearly 250 volunteers, who undertake driving duties, family support, administration and running its shops to enable people with a life-limiting illness to be cared for in the comfort of their own homes, surrounded by family and friends.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK, and is given for outstanding service to the community.

Hospice Director Alison Hands said: "We are thrilled to receive this award as

recognition of the outstanding contribution volunteers make to the work of Tynedale Hospice at Home. I'd like to take this opportunity to say 'thank you' to anyone that has volunteered with the hospice in the past, or is a volunteer today. This award recognises your hard work and dedication to maintaining our services."

Anyone wanting to join the charity's volunteer group should contact volunteer coordinator Sheila Ryder on 01434 611912 or visit the website at www.tynedalehospice.com for more information.



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Well known Ponteland photographer dies aged 103

By Muriel Sobo

Well known Ponteland photographer Geoff Willey died peacefully at Grange Lea Rest Home in May just a few months short of his 104th birthday.

He had lived here since 1964, establishing a photography business in the village as well as being a founder member of the Ponteland Photographic Society and an early member of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

But this was only half his life and, born in Honley near Holmfirth, he was a Yorkshireman to the last.

His passion was the Ryedale Folk Museum at Hutton-le-Hole in North Yorkshire. He was brought up in Scarborough where his father ran a high class grocery store and Geoff delivered the goods in the van but hated the role.

Aged 11 years he was given a Brownie box camera and this started not only his photographic interest but a technical flair. He later built a crystal radio set, followed by a more sophisticated version where he could tune in to other radio hams with his own call sign, then an early television set -

then he built his first motor bike!

Failing his medical for the armed forces, he was taken on by the Ministry of Information based in Newcastle and spent the war years touring remote communities in Northumberland and later in Yorkshire showing propaganda films. His technical skills came in useful when a village hall at Boulmer had no electricity supply.

After the war he trained as a frogman as part of his work for seaweed research, based first at Musselburgh and then Orkney. Next he worked at top secret Spadeadam on the Blue Streak rocket programme and finally at the RVI in Newcastle, all the time taking high quality very technical photographs, sometimes in trying or dangerous conditions. A man of exceptional ability!

In 1964 he married Daphne, a farmer's daughter and long term friend from Yorkshire with whom he shared many interests. Sadly, Daphne developed a

terminal illness and Geoff was her devoted carer till her death.

Geoff retired from the RVI in 1976 and was able to devote his time and energy to the development of the Ryedale Museum. His love of Ryedale developed early when as a young man he would take his dog and camera for long walks over the moors. Not only did he observe and photograph the wildlife, he made many friends who were later involved in this long term project.

He made a photographic record of the museum's progress and went down there to celebrate his 100th birthday. His unique collection of cameras and photographs has been donated to the museum. He even wrote a book, with professional help, titled 'Ryedale in my Heart'. Just one of many achievements.

A memorial service was held in St Mary's Church on Friday June 12th.

New homes approved for Medburn

More homes are set to be built in Medburn after an outline proposal was approved, despite objections from neighbouring residents.

Woodruff & Co's application for 15 executive dwellings on a 1.6-hectare green field site north east of Greenrigg was given the go ahead at the Northumberland County Council's strategic planning committee.

The latest bid follows approvals for another 37 homes for the hamlet, to the anger of some locals. There were four letters of objection lodged and Ponteland Town Council was against the plans.

Concerns include the additional harm to the peace and tranquillity

of Medburn, the impact of the road access and 'unsuitable' housing types and density and the fear that there would be insufficient capacity for surface water as a result of the new homes.

One resident wrote: "It would appear that the hamlet of Medburn is being destroyed by stealth."

Northumberland County Council said it had been previously considered that Medburn was not a sustainable settlement for new housing, but two appeal decisions within the hamlet for a total of 19 homes determined that it is not a remote or unsustainable location by virtue of its close proximity and connectivity to Ponteland and its range of services.



Speeding crackdown after spate of crashes



By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Neighbourhood Beat Manager

In the month from May 15th to June 14th we have had 21 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- One fraud by false representation
- Three thefts from motor vehicles
- One arson
- Three damages to property
- Two thefts of property
- One breach of non-molestation order
- Three assaults
- One damage to a motor vehicle
- Four thefts from shops
- One theft from a dwelling
- One possession of cannabis.

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

Please remember to lock your vehicle doors when you leave them parked up. Even if the vehicle is parked on your drive it could still be entered if it's left unlocked.

Several residents on Darras Road have highlighted their concerns regarding road traffic collisions which have occurred on other parts of the road in addition to the junction with Western Way.

These concerns have been passed to the Town Council Highways Committee for their consultation with the County Council with a view to finding a solution. In addition to this police officers and Community Speedwatch volunteers will also target the area to tackle speeding issues.

For more information about Community Speedwatch visit the Working for Us section of the Northumbria Police website at www.northumbria.police.uk

If you would like 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 Rob Anderson
11th July 10am-11am Waitrose, Ponteland
11th July 11.30am-12.30pm Co-op, Broadway
- CSO 4326 Paul Cotterill
18th July 9.30am-10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland

Engagement days for the Ponteland area are:

- Belsay 6pm – 8pm July 15th
- Merton Way, Ponteland 10am-12noon July 22nd
- Broadway, Ponteland 1pm-3pm July 22nd

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New era for emergency care as £75m hospital opens

Major changes to emergency care in Northumberland have gone live with the opening of a pioneering £75m hospital.

All serious emergencies across Northumberland and North Tyneside will now be dealt with at the new Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington.

It is the first purpose-built dedicated emergency care hospital in England and will have emergency care consultants on site 24/7, meaning patients will be seen quickly by an expert with senior clinical decision making upon arrival and quick access to tests and scans so treatment can start sooner.

Consultants specialising in a broad range of conditions will also be available every day, speeding up specialist care for patients, maximising chances of survival and a good recovery and helping to save more lives.

Changes have also taken place in emergency care at Hexham, North Tyneside and Wansbeck general hospitals, which have become 24-hour walk-in

services providing urgent care for people with less serious conditions. Minor injury units in Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth and Haltwhistle will continue to provide services as they do now.

The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital, opened on June 16th, has 210 acute beds in seven speciality wards: surgery; trauma; cardiology; respiratory; elderly care (including stroke); acute medical unit; gastrointestinal.

In addition there is:

- a state-of-the-art emergency department with 36 treatment rooms and four resuscitation bays
- a 14 bed short stay paediatric assessment unit
- an ambulatory care unit to provide care for those who do not need emergency hospital admission
- an 18 bed critical care unit
- a birthing centre with an obstetric-led unit and co-located midwifery-led care with 14 delivery rooms, two birthing pools and 20 en-suite single rooms on the maternity ward

- six operating theatres for emergency and high risk surgery and a dedicated maternity theatre located close to the delivery area
- state-of-the-art diagnostics including four x-ray rooms, two CT scanners, two ultrasound systems, a cardiac catheter lab, an endoscopy room and an MRI scanner.

Medical director of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust David Evans said: "Our new model of care is about getting those patients who are seriously ill or injured to a place where the right experts will be there consistently, round the clock, ready to treat them. Our general hospitals will also continue to provide round the clock care at 24 hour walk-in services for the less serious conditions which often need urgent attention."

If anyone is unsure about where to go, then they should contact their GP or call NHS 111 for advice on the most appropriate service. To find out more visit: www.northumbria.nhs.uk/emergency

Tea parlour planned for Darras Hall

A former Darras Hall carpet shop could be turned into a tea parlour under plans lodged with Northumberland County Council.

Lynsey Caizley has submitted the planning application for a change of use for the vacant retail unit on Broadway, which would be open daily from 8am to 6pm.

Her application states: "The intention is to launch a high quality,

family orientated, tea parlour named Bella & Frannie's Tea Parlour within Darras Hall. The tea parlour will offer high quality blend teas, fresh coffees, fresh milkshakes and smoothies, sweet treats including a range of healthy treats, layer cakes, hot and cold sandwiches, afternoon tea, ice creams etc."

Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Civic Society have both expressed reservations about a planned outside seating area, saying it must not restrict pedestrian access along the footpath.

Rep recruiting for next shows

By Lesley Eltringham

Ponteland Repertory Society is looking for new members both on and off stage to have fun and get involved in the next season's productions.

After the great success of our recent productions 'Oh What A Lovely War' and 'Dick Whittington And His Cat', we are beginning the casting for our next two shows 'The Flint Street Nativity' and 'Oliver!'

'The Flint Street Nativity' by Tim Firth, which will be performed at the Memorial Hall on November 25th to 28th at 7.30pm, is a warm and witty comedy in which seven-year-olds, played by adult actors, are about to perform their nativity play to proud mums and dads.

It will be a wonderful and light hearted lead into your Christmas festivities. Jonny Woollett, the show's director, invites anyone interested in taking part in the play to come to an initial meeting at 2pm on Sunday August 23rd in the coffee lounge at Ponteland Memorial Hall. More details from Jonny via email jnywoollett@outlook.com or tel 07841 550198.

Lionel Bart's ever-popular musical 'Oliver!' is the Rep's choice for their Spring 2016 production and we are beginning a search for young actors of between 10 and 14 years - especially boys to play the parts of Oliver, the boys in the Workhouse and Fagin's Gang.

You can contact the director Carole Davies to let us know you are interested in being involved by email caroledavies9@gmail.com or on (01661) 871161. We look forward to hearing from you!

Find out more about the Rep at www.pontelandrep.co.uk



A scene from the 2015 production of Dick Whittington and his Cat.



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Pont News recruits a new reader from Kent and a thank you to a mystery lady who handed in a lost wallet in this month's letters...

'Pontelander' from Kent delighted to discover Pont News

Have just found and read Pont News & Views. What a splendid publication full of interesting snippets of news which made me feel quite homesick, although I haven't lived in the North-East since joining the Royal Navy in 1955.

I was born at, and my parents lived at, Horton Grange. Coates Endowed was my primary school with Mr Parker and Mr Stokoe as my headmasters.

The standard of education was excellent and saw me progress to the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle and ultimately officer selection in the Royal Navy. Sixty years later I am retired in Folkestone but still consider myself a 'Pontelander'.

Will certainly look forward to future editions of Pont News.

Thomas Lowrie
Stiles Close,
Folkestone, Kent

Thank you for finding my wallet

I would like to thank the lady who found the gent's wallet in the Waitrose car park on Friday May 15th.

I was able to retrieve the wallet a very short time afterwards but unfortunately no contact details were left so I hope that she sees this note of thanks.

It is nice to see there are still some trustworthy people about. Thank you so very much.

Jim Falcus
Errington Road,
Darras Hall

August issue deadlines: Delivery of the August issue will start on Monday July 27th and be completed by Friday July 31st. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday July 13th. If you are aware of any missed properties please contact the editor at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or call (0191) 3408422. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the August 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.



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What's on...

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on Wednesday July 1st is Norman Kirtlan. His topic is 'A Day in the Life of a Forensic Artist'. We meet in St Mary's Church Hall at 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Visitors are welcome. No charge. Interested in our activities? Come to a monthly meeting, visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring the membership secretary on (01661) 822225. Our next meeting will be on August 5th.

Bird spotting walk

The Ponteland branch of Northumberland Wildlife Trust is organising a 'bird spotting walk' on July 3 at Watergate Park and woods off the A692 near Sunnyside. Don't worry about how to get there. Meet at the Memorial Hall car park at 10am and fill up cars. The walk will be led by well-known birder John Almond and should last for about an hour. Numbers limited to 20, either members or friends, so please send names to Rita Pearce on (01661) 825816. Non-members pay the usual £2.

Ponteland Methodist Church

Sunday 9.45am 'The Bridge' – modern worship. Dates for July: 5th (4pm family service); 12th (9.45am); 19th (9.45 am); 26th (9.45am youth service). Sunday services 10am and 6.30pm followed by refreshments. Children's 'Stepping stones' during morning services. Monday 'Open door' drop-in café, 2pm - 4pm, drinks/scones/cakes/friendship. House groups and fellowship meetings, walking groups, carpet bowls, prayer and Fairtrade groups, Thursday toddlers, Girls Brigade, Boys Brigade and much more! - Contact Ann at anncooperx@gmail.com or on (01661) 824347.

Events at St Mary's Church

Celebration Service - Sunday July 5th 10am. Peter Barham, the Vicar, was ordained as a priest 20 years ago; Christine Brown was ordained priest 10 years ago, so this will be a service to celebrate. Peter worked in Suffolk for 13 years - as Curate in seven villages north of Bury St Edmunds, Vicar of four villages south of the town, then as Canon Pastor of the Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds. He came to Ponteland seven years ago. Christine was ordained in Newcastle Cathedral, and has worked in Ponteland and as Chaplain to St Oswald's Hospice. All will be welcome to the service, and then for refreshments in the Church Hall. Sunday July 19th 10am - All Age Worship, a chance to reflect on faith and life from a different angle. 6.30pm, Choral Evensong, a traditional service led by our choir.

Ponteland Ramblers

Ponteland Ramblers have organised walks on the following dates in July: Sunday 5th from Plenneller, and Sunday 19th from Anick. There will also be Wednesday walks on the 8th and 22nd. 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.

Darras Hall WI

We invite you to our meeting on Thursday July 9th at 2pm in the Meeting Room of the URC Church, Broadway, Darras Hall. This month our speaker is Janet Redpath and her topic is 'Magistrate – Secret'. An intriguing title - we can say no more! The competition is for a floral arrangement in a tea cup. All visitors are most welcome.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday July 13th is Barry Mead whose talk is entitled 'Bedlington Iron and Engine Works'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm.

Friends of Kirkley Hall talk

Friends of Kirkley Hall would welcome members of the public to our next talk taking place in the Grade II listed building at Kirkley Hall. On July 15th Kay Cooke will talk about Dilston Physic Garden, its heritage, key players, pioneering research and ambitions. The talk starts at 7pm and a charge of £5 is made to non-members.

Plant Heritage Plant Fair

The North East Group of Plant Heritage will be holding their Plant Fair at Blagdon Hall on Sunday July 19th from 10am to 3pm. There will be new nurseries there this year with their own special plants and other attractions including a children's treasure trail. The wonderful grounds will be open and dogs are welcome. There will be fresh home baked teas. Entry is £3, free for children. The group meets in the winter months in Ponteland Memorial Hall. For more information contact david@potentilla.org.uk

Kirkley WI

The ladies at Kirkley WI look forward to their annual summer outing this month. Last October they successfully bid at the Northumberland Federation Auction for a guided tour of Hexham Abbey, followed by afternoon tea, hosted

by Lowgate WI. Members will have opportunity to view the new fascinating, interactive exhibition at the Abbey and discover some astonishing facts. Later they are assured that tea with the Lowgate ladies will be a delicious treat. There is no meeting in August. Next meeting September 2nd.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

The next meeting of the Ponteland Floral Art Club will be held on Tuesday July 21st in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland. The meeting starts at 7.30pm, and the demonstrator is Carola Kean of Leominster. Carola is an extremely talented National Demonstrator, and her chosen theme is 'Something for Summer'. Visitors are welcome, and the fee for this event is £10. '

Ponteland Lions monthly bookstall

Ponteland Lions will be holding their monthly bookstall at Waitrose on Saturday July 25th from 9am to 4pm.

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

Monday July 27th - Talk entitled 'A Modern Twist on Traditional Embroidery' by Heather Waring from Stokesley, North Yorkshire. Meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, on the 4th Monday of each month from 2pm to 4pm. You can become a member, or join us for a meeting as a visitor (£4). Contact eg_ne_ponteland@btinternet.com or (01661) 881395.

Line dancing

We meet every Wednesday at 7pm in St Mary's Church Hall. 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. Contact Rosemary Gray on (01661) 822493.



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WISH LIST FOR 2015-16

The Council approved the wish list for 2015-16. It was noted that in some cases permission from the county council for the projects would be required and possibly consultation with residents. The items agreed were:

- The installation of bollards on Callerton Lane (subject to NCC approval).
- A permanent speed indicator sign at a site to be agreed.
- Replacement of missing and decrepit road signs (locations to be agreed).
- A new notice board at Broadway.
- The development of a sensory garden at a location to be agreed.
- An allowance to carry out additional works at the Skate Park.
- Recording equipment for Council Meetings.
- An allowance to carry out a survey of residents on various issues.

PUBLIC TOILETS – THORNHILL ROAD

It is anticipated that work will start on the refurbishment of the public toilets on Monday June 22nd. It is likely that the work will take approximately eight weeks, following which Ponteland will have a much improved facility. The Town Council apologises for any inconvenience caused by the closure.

VEXATIOUS POLICY

The Council had previously discussed a draft policy for dealing with vexatious complainants. This had been deferred pending further work being carried out and a further document had been circulated to the meeting. It was noted that many councils had adopted such a policy. The policy was agreed by the Council subject to some minor amendments.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

A grant of £500 was approved for funds towards communicating with residents and promoting and encouraging new membership of the organisation following a grant application from Ponteland Community Partnership.

PROJECTS REPORT

Councillors were informed that some information regarding land ownership had been received from the Solicitor. It was agreed to consider this report in more detail at the July meeting as there were a number of issues that required further examination by the Council. There would also be additional work to be carried out on the land survey by the Solicitor once this examination had been completed.

ANNUAL AUDIT 2014-15

The Council considered and approved the Annual Return which must be submitted to the external auditors by July 8th. A copy of the internal auditors report was also considered. He had no issues to draw to the attention of the Council.

PONTELAND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

The Town Council agreed in principle to the formation of a small sub group of the Neighbourhood Plan Group who would hold discussions with NCC regarding the core strategy. This was subject to appropriate terms of reference being drawn up and agreed by the Council.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Highways Working Party had met on May 15th. It was agreed to delegate authority to the Clerk to proceed with the cleaning of the Darras Road bridge at a cost of £200. Further work may be considered once a meeting with the Council's Tree Consultant had been held.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on May 26th. The Council agreed to establish a sinking fund and register for tree replacements other than donor trees when it had been necessary to fell a tree although the replacement may not be in the same location. The Council also approved a proposal in principle for an adult fitness area subject to adequate funding being available and a suitable location being agreed. A request for a litter bin at Prestwick Road Ends was agreed with the proviso that the County Council agree to empty it. It was also agreed to monitor usage of the bin.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The Cemetery Committee had met on June 1st. The following changes were agreed: there would no longer be any services offered on a Saturday; actual planting of memorial trees would only take place in the planting season between October and March. Funeral directors who use the facility will be informed.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Dodd reported that he was withdrawn from the Local Development Framework (Core Strategy) Committee at NCC, and that a meeting of the NCC Cabinet to discuss the proposed relocation of County Hall to Ashington was postponed due to land issues.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor's Diary

A list of events and meetings attended by the Mayor during May was circulated to the Council.

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



Ponteland's hidden garden opens again

By Muriel Sobo

Eland Green Garden opened last year for the British Red Cross and owner Clare Stephenson is doing it again this year.

The date is Sunday July 12th from 11am to 4.30pm. Eland Green Farm is on the North Road just past the Berwick Hill junction and there is plenty of car parking.

Clare, who does almost all the gardening, says she's not really a gardener; she just inherited the garden and has to keep it looking good. Her family have been farmers at Eland Green for two centuries since three Stephenson brothers bought the land from George Silvertop.

There are many different areas in this hidden two acre garden including a tennis court, vegetable and fruit areas, a unique



summer house, interesting stone figures and of course lots of colour from flowers, shrubs and all surrounded by mature trees. There will be refreshments and a plant stall.



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Rainbow gathering at Kirkley Hall

By Judith Howard

Nearly 200 Rainbows from all over Northumberland, including Ponteland, gathered at Kirkley Hall for an animal fayre.

The girls aged five to seven years, the youngest section of Girlguiding, visited the Zoo, got to meet and hold some furry and not so furry animals, made animal themed crafts and enjoyed sports activities in the sports hall.

Jessica Ellis, aged five, from Ponteland, said: "It was good to touch the snake, I thought it would be slimy and it wasn't but I preferred to hold the guinea pig!"

Girlguiding gives girls and young women their own space to have fun, grow in confidence and discover their full potential. There are over 550,000 members aged five to 25 and 100,000 volunteers. Find out more at www.girlguiding.org.uk.

Rainbow Jessica Ellis, five, from Ponteland with the guinea pig at Kirkley Zoo



Raffle raises more than £3,000 for Children's Heart Unit Fund

A raffle organised by Pont Charity Group raised more than £3,000 for the Children's Heart Unit Fund (CHUF).

Hilary Dunn, Manager of Newcastle Building Society, in Broadway, Darras Hall, kindly carried out the draw, assisted by Trustee Andy Anderson.

The winners are: No 1 – 1840; No 2 – 2374; No 3 – 0560; No 4 – 1347; No 5 – 2689; No 6 – 1308; No 7 – 1129. Thanks to all who contributed.



At the Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership held on May 20th, the following officers and members of the Executive Council were elected to serve for the next 12 months.

Officers

Chairman – Alma Dunigan; Vice Chairman – Syd Cowan; Hon Secretary – Shirley Hill; Hon Treasurer – Christine Greenwell.

Executive Council Members

Mike Brown, Sheila Campbell, George Clasper, David Gambles, Brian Prickett, Robin Ramsay and Margaret Stainsby.

Co-opted members

PC Rob Anderson (Police); Carl Rawlings (Ponteland Town Council); Churches Together (Faith Representative).



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Ponteland Community High School Report

Rachel and Philippa off on mission to Kosova

Students Rachel Kirtley and Philippa Hood are off on a mission to Kosova to provide care to terminally ill patients.

The girls, both aged 16 and from Ponteland, are taking the trip with Smile International as part of their work for the Queen's Award.

When deciding on how to complete their voluntary service they both felt very strongly they wanted to take part in some mission work abroad. After lots of research, they found the trip to Kosova for a week in July with the charity, which aims to relieve suffering and poverty around the world through its feeding, educating, empowering and developing programmes.

A Smile International spokesman said: "Our work in Kosova centres on providing food for the hungry, giving opportunities for children to learn new skills and providing palliative care to terminally-ill patients."

The girls have been very busy with fundraising for their trip, holding a ceilidh at Ponteland Methodist Church, a fundraiser meal at Rialto's, a bag pack at Waitrose and cake sales.

Rachel said: "We would both like to thank everyone who has supported these events and to the local businesses who kindly donated various raffle prizes."

The original fundraising target of £2,200 has already been reached, but anyone wishing to add a donation can do so via: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/rachelphillykosova>



Ponteland artist hopes to go global

A Ponteland artist is hoping to go global after his work started to attract international attention.

Alan Reed is an accomplished watercolour artist who launched his career 30 years ago using the Enterprise Allowance Scheme – guaranteeing him £40 a week income after he set up his business using £1,000 of his own funds following unemployment.

He trained as an illustrator and graphic designer at Newcastle College and spent the early part of his career doing artist impressions of new building projects for architects. His pieces include scenes from his native North East and overseas, including Italy, the Middle East and the US.

As well as painting and taking commissions, Alan also runs private lessons in painting and drawing and leads regular painting holidays in Italy. Now, after years of selling works from his Ponteland studio, Alan has launched a website which he hopes will attract buyers from further afield.

He said: "After discovering my work via the internet, an Italian gentleman, now living in Canada, bought an original that I had painted in Italy. Then another. And has now commissioned me to paint more in Rome. That would never have happened without him discovering my art via the internet."

This year one of Alan's limited edition prints of Grey Street in Newcastle landed him among the finalists for the Best Selling Artist title at the Fine Art Trade Guild. In 2014 he was shortlisted for Artists of the Year by the Artists and Illustrators Magazine.



ROAD CLOSED ONE WAY FOR RESURFACING WORK

Motorists are being warned of a temporary road closure in Ponteland for resurfacing work in July.

Thornhill Road will be closed to southbound traffic from its junction with North Road between 8am and 5pm from July 27th to July 31st. The alternative route is via North Road and the northbound entrance to Thornhill Road at the Blackbird Inn.

For more information contact Northumberland County Council on 0845 600 6400 quoting reference 3431.

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Dementia unit plan axed in favour of new homes

Plans to build a dementia care unit on the former Ponteland Care Village site have been axed in favour of nine additional homes.

The development to support people with learning disabilities was constructed on North Road in the late 1980s. In 2010, CARE Ponteland (now operating as Hft) announced it was looking to have much of this area redeveloped as housing.

This would allow investment in new off-site options for the people it supports and enable a specialist dementia care unit to be built on site.

Full planning permission was granted by Northumberland County Council for the unit and 38 dwellings in 2012 and 2013.

Demolition of the existing structures on the site has taken place and construction of the residential element of the Bellway Homes scheme, which includes seven affordable properties, started.

Bellway has now submitted a planning application for an extra six 3-bed homes and three 4-bed homes on the south eastern corner of the site.

In its response to the application, Ponteland Civic Society suggested the whole of the site that had been earmarked for the unit should be given over to the provision of affordable dwellings, adding: "This would certainly be more beneficial, in relation to actual housing need, than simply building more of the same."

New free service to support carers

A new free service to support carers in Northumberland has been launched.

Serrac (anagram of carers) is a social enterprise based in Ashington which aims to bring together service professionals and carers to address the problems faced when accident or ill health leaves a family member needing care.


There are an estimated 35,000 people in Northumberland looking after others either full or part time and the number is set to grow.


Kev Whittaker, business development manager for Serrac, said: "Serrac was set up to provide a way of putting those in need of help in touch with legal, financial and other service professionals who share our social and ethical conscience. We focus our service on the particular needs of carers but it is also free to anyone in Northumberland who may be able to benefit from it."


Serrac's income comes from referral fees from service partners and all of its profits go back into Carers Northumberland, a charity dedicated to improving the lives of carers in the county.


Sharon Spurling, chief executive officer of Carers Northumberland said: "We fully support Serrac and welcome their work in Northumberland in finding solutions to the problems so many of our carers face today."


To find out more visit: www.serrac.co.uk


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Girls' football team wins league title in first season

By Helen Smith (proud mum)

A newly formed girls' football team is celebrating a league championship in its first season.

Ponteland United U14 Girls, which formed last September with 10 players from Ponteland schools, has just secured the Le Championette league title and was runner up in the 2015 U14 Wade Financial trophy cup final against Wylam Rockettes.

The winning team members are: Holly Huntley, Hollie Foggin, Georgia Lynch, Katie Crozier, Niaomi Branks, Yasmeen Amer and Maddison Brown from Ponteland Middle, Amelia Smith from Richard Coates, and Victoria Lynch and Emma Robson (team captain) from Ponteland High.

They are managed by Stephen Smith and assistant manager Stuart Branks, proud fathers of team players.


The team is now recruiting for new Year 9 and 10 players to join for next year's U15 league challenge. They train on a Thursday evening on the new Ponteland 3G pitch from 6pm to 7pm and play matches on Saturday mornings at their home ground Bullocksteads, Wooslington.



For more information contact Stephen at stephen.footballpufc@yahoo.co.uk



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