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FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



10th
anniversary
issue

Five gold medals for Ponteland and
Prestwick at Northumbria in Bloom

Platinum celebration for
Jim and Joan

Man arrested after spate of
thefts from cars

Green belt campaigners dismayed at plans for 900 new homes



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Lovely weather for ducks!

Perfect weather and a host of new attractions saw families flocking to Ponteland Park for the annual duck races.

Ticket holders cheered on as 500 ducks competed in five races, with entertainment also including a bouncy slide, archery, tombola, face painting, candy floss, coconut shy, ball in a bucket and a special teddy bear stand. The farmer's market was another huge draw.

As last year's winner, Molly Storer, ten, was asked to start the children's 'build your own boat' race – and won again!

Steve Cox, President of Ponteland Rotary Club, said: "I would like to thank all those who helped in making it such a wonderful family day of entertainment and excitement. We raised over £3,300 for charity that day, and that money will go towards several local charities in due course."

Winners

- First Adult Duck Race - White Ticket 168
- First Children's Duck Race - Pink Ticket 189 - Miss Scott
- Second Adult Duck Race - Yellow Ticket 210 - Brian Angus
- Second Children's Duck Race - Purple Ticket 188 - Jardine
- Third Adult Duck Race - Red Ticket 373 - M Falconer
- Children's Build Your Own Boat Winner - Molly Storer
- First Business Boat Race - Rowlands Chartered Accountants
- Second Business Boat Race - Robson & Cowan



Photos by Pat Walker

Developer not to appeal over Birney Hill

The developer behind plans for a 280-home scheme on green belt land at Birney Hill will not be appealing the Secretary of State's refusal of planning permission.

Lugano Property Group confirmed it is not pursuing a judicial review - the only remaining avenue for appeal after Local Government Secretary Greg Clark rejected the appeal against the refusal of planning permission by Northumberland County Council.

This appeal had been the subject of a nine day planning inquiry held in January at Newcastle Falcons rugby club in Kingston Park. The Minister backed a recommendation by Planning Inspector John Gray, who presided over the hearing, to reject the plans.

Lugano had argued there were special circumstances for allowing what is known in planning parlance as "serious harm" to the green belt: 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.

Describing the scheme as a 'once in a lifetime opportunity', Lugano had told the inquiry a £10.7m package of

benefits would include: £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 included the provision of 17.9 hectares of open space and 84 'affordable' homes on site.

But the Department of Communities and Local Government said the proposed development would be "seriously harmful to the Green Belt".

The controversial plans, lodged in January 2013, had sparked a vociferous opposition campaign, with 4,310 letters of objection to the county council and dozens of 'Ponteland Says No To Green Belt Development' signs adorning the main road into the village.

A site visit by planning officers and committee members attracted 250 placard wielding campaigners, while an estimated 550 residents attended a packed two-and-a-half hour public

meeting held at the High School. There were also 487 letters of support received during the formal consultation process.

The decision by Lugano to not pursue a judicial review marks the end of the two-and-a-half year battle by green belt campaigners against the Birney Hill plans.

Responding to the news, Ponteland Green Belt Group chairman Tony Noble said: "We are pleased to hear that Lugano Property Group has decided not to pursue the Birney Hill application in the High Court.

"But we would remind residents who care about the protection the green belt provides to Ponteland that a far greater threat is on the horizon in the form of the NCC Core Strategy, which is promoting the release of vast areas of green belt land around Ponteland to facilitate large scale housing development. The Ponteland Green Belt Group is not complacent. Unfortunately the fight continues."

Green belt campaigners' dismay at plans for 900 new homes: p8-9.



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Emily wins silver in European Youth Olympics

A Darras Hall schoolgirl swimmer is celebrating after winning a silver medal at the European Youth Olympic Festival.

Emily Large, 14, was part of the 44-strong squad representing Great Britain at the event in Tbilisi, Georgia, and was the first Briton to make the podium after finishing second in the 200m butterfly with a time of 2:16.20.

The Kings Priory student qualified for the competition after winning the 200m butterfly and 400m individual medley and gaining silver in the 100m butterfly at the British Swimming Championships held at the London Aquatics Centre in April.

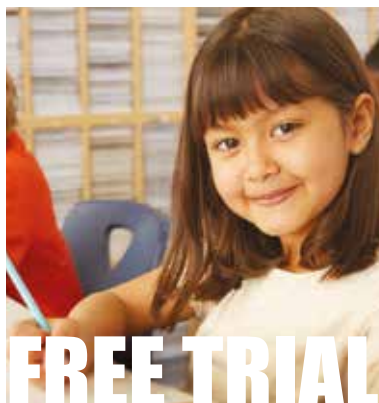
Former Darras Hall First School and Ponteland Community Middle School pupil Emily, who first started swimming at Ponteland Leisure Centre, said: "This was my best event so I was just hoping to do well but a medal has just topped it. Being the first British athlete to win a medal is amazing and I am overjoyed."

Following her medal-winning performance at Tbilisi in July, Emily, of Darras Road, won double gold (100 fly and 200 fly) at the Sainsbury's UK School Games at the Manchester Aquatics Centre on September 5-6.

Proud dad Andy said: "The competition is based on regional squads, and Emily represented England North against teams from England Central and England South, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The competition was for athletes aged up to 16 so at 14 she did extremely well as she was the youngest in both her events."



Winning for Great Britain: Emily Large. Photo courtesy of Team GB.



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Arrest made after spate of thefts from motor vehicles



PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager

During the month of August there have been 20 crimes recorded for the Ponteland and outlying area.

These break down to the following offences:

- three burglary other than dwelling
- six thefts from motor vehicle
- one damage to motor vehicle
- one damage to dwelling
- one theft from business premises
- one theft from a construction site
- one assault
- one public order offence
- five shoplifting.

The three burglaries were at Ponteland Leisure Centre, Matfen Golf Club and in Medburn. The six thefts from motor vehicle were in Darras Road, Western Way, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Edge Hill, Thornhill Road and the Stamfordham area. A man has been arrested in relation to a number of the thefts from motor vehicles and is currently on police bail pending enquiries.

A man was arrested for the assault and issued with a simple caution, and a woman

has been arrested and charged for the three Waitrose thefts.

There has also been an increased awareness and concern within the community following reports of sexual offences locally. A complaint of an alleged rape that was reported to have happened in Ponteland on Thursday August 27 has been withdrawn. Police are no longer investigating this incident as a rape and the man arrested had no connection to the incident and will face no further action.

Other issues of concern include the 'school run' and telephone/internet scams.

Whether picking up or dropping children from school, or resident in area, please show consideration to other residents and pedestrians. Refrain from parking on footpaths, blocking access roads or driveways and park lawfully.

Residents are reminded to be alert to unwanted telephone calls or emails from dubious companies.

Many will claim to be contacting you on behalf of internet security, utility companies

of financial organisations. Put very simply, they are after your cash or access to it.

Please do not disclose any personal or financial details and do not be tempted to click on a link in an email if dubious of its origin. Reports of online fraud can be made to your internet service provider. Fraudulent calls can be reported to Action Fraud on 0300 1232040. Consider signing up to a call barring service to prevent such calls.

Local police surgeries will be held on the following dates:

- Saturday 26th September 9.30am – 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland with CSO Paul Cotterill
- Saturday 10th October 10am – 11am Co-op, Broadway with PC Lee Davison
- Saturday 10th October 11.30am – 12.30pm Belsay shop with PC Lee Davison

Ponteland Neighbourhood Team can be contacted at easttyndale.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk or on 101 ext-69569.



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Green belt campaigners dismayed at plans for hundreds more homes

Green belt campaigners have reacted with dismay after Northumberland County Council revealed it was planning to increase the allocation for housing in Ponteland by over 40 per cent to 900 new homes.

The authority is about to launch a fresh public consultation on its revised core strategy, which has a number of significant changes from the earlier version which was the subject of a three month consultation which ended in February.

The Northumberland Local Plan Pre Submission Core Strategy – a long term planning blueprint running to 2031 – and the accompanying Ponteland Supplementary Planning Document proposes:

- Ponteland is now identified as a 'main town' rather than a 'service centre'
- An increase in housing allocation for Ponteland from 640 to 900
- A new area of land allocated for 180 homes between Callerton Lane and Willow Way
- Up to 400 homes on the current schools/leisure centre site
- Significant investment in new education and leisure facilities
- Clickemin Farm site is no longer released for housing and is retained as green belt
- Land in north west of Ponteland (behind Ladywell Way/Kirkley Drive and at Eland Green) is no longer safeguarded for future development, retained as green belt
- A five hectare site just off the airport roundabout safeguarded for relocation of Meadowfield industrial estate.

The changes leave big question marks over the 500-home Ponteland Garden Village scheme Banks Property had planned for the Clickemin Farm site and

the future of a bypass, which appears to be now on the backburner after the proposed route was removed.

The overall amount of green belt to be released for development has been reduced by 14.5 hectares, with a higher concentration of development on the 70-hectare triangle bordered by Callerton Lane, Mayfair Gardens, Fairney Edge, Cheviot View and Rotary Way which currently comprises Ponteland Middle and High Schools, the leisure centre, fire station and farmland.

Here the mixed use housing and employment area increases by more than 10 hectares to just under 30 hectares, while the 56-hectare area previously designated as education, leisure, playing fields and open space is reduced to a 28-hectare education, leisure and community facilities zone. A residential property, Coruisk, which lies within the site boundary is unaffected.

The map released by the county council (opposite) shows the areas earmarked for development. The figure of 900 homes is only indicative – the number of homes built could be higher – and there have already been 126 homes built which fall within this allocation as the plan period starts in April 2011. The other main site for new housing is the former police headquarters, with 310 homes allocated.

Green belt campaigners reacted furiously to the increased housing allocation, saying it would destroy the character of Ponteland.

Tony Noble, Chair of Ponteland Green Belt Group, said: "Ponteland Green Belt Group is dismayed that Northumberland County Council continues to ignore the views of the vast majority of Ponteland residents.

"Although we are in the process of reviewing the document, our immediate concerns are focused on the increased housing allocation for Ponteland (at odds with previous assurances from the county council) and the proposal to designate Ponteland as a 'main town'. We were listed previously as a 'service centre'. This is no doubt an attempt to justify the vast increase in housing allocation.

"The housing numbers provided within this version are a minimum; sites identified for development within this version provide the potential for between 1,700 to 2,000 homes.

"It would appear that NCC has made a conscious decision to destroy the distinctive and unique character of Ponteland."

The county council said the change in designation of Ponteland from a 'service centre' to a 'main town' and the increased housing reflected the 'significant planned investment in education and leisure for the town' – details of which will be revealed at a public meeting in early November.

But MP Guy Opperman responded: "It seems in Ponteland, at least, our communities have not been listened to. Fundamentally I believe in the green belt, and I will always be a big champion of the vital role the green belt plays here in Ponteland and Darras Hall.

"Residents are rightly concerned that Northumberland County Council's latest plan looks to be imposing a huge growth in housing numbers, with potential for over 2,000 new homes, which would increase our local population by more than a third.

"Fundamentally, substantial areas of the green belt are still being earmarked for housing. I have still yet to see any substantive evidence to support the county council's case for these proposed green belt deletions."

Coun Allan Hepple, cabinet member for economic growth, said: "We have listened very carefully to the views of everyone who has commented on the core strategy and, particularly with regard to Ponteland, have made a number of significant

changes to try to address concerns.

"Major changes include significantly reducing the level of safeguarded land proposed to be removed from the Green Belt and the identification of a future site for employment development.

"The council is planning to make significant investment in community infrastructure including in schools and leisure facilities in Ponteland, and this is reflected in the changes proposed in the core strategy. The proposals better reflect the role of the town and will ensure the delivery of sustainable development.

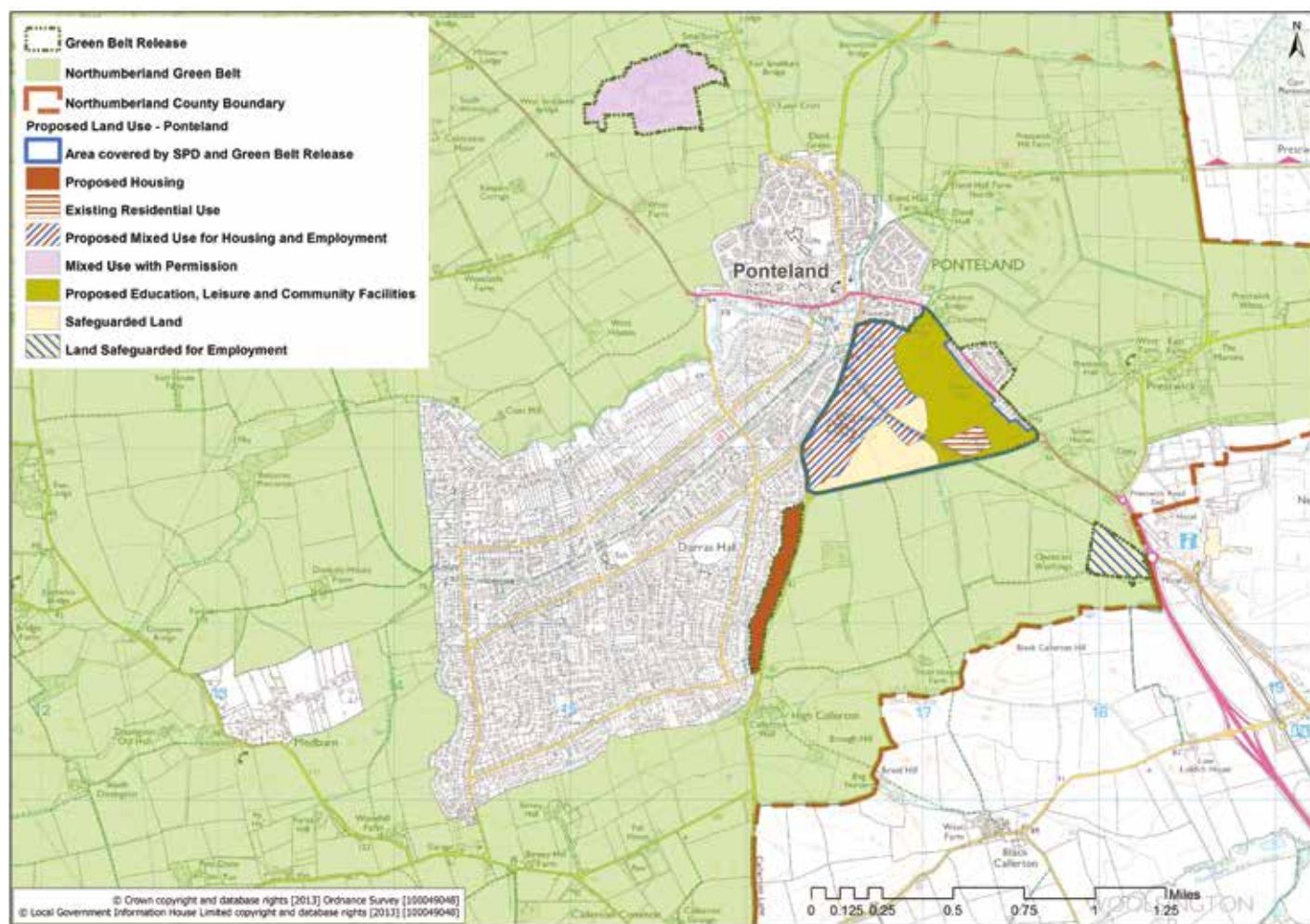
"The plan clearly shows provision for around 900 additional new homes, nowhere near the figures quoted by the

local MP and the Green Belt group."

Responding to the revised plan, Mark Dowdall, environment and community director at The Banks Group, said: "The development and implementation of the Northumberland housing strategy document will be central to the long-term sustainability of community life, local services and businesses in the county's main population centres.

"As the county council moves towards the completion of the plan, we will continue to put forward ideas and opinions to them alongside all other interested parties which we hope will be useful."

For more information on the plans visit: www.northumberland.gov.uk/corestrategy



The formal consultation period for the Northumberland Local Plan Pre Submission Core Strategy runs from October 11 to November 25.

It is the final opportunity for people to comment on the core strategy before it is submitted to a planning inspector for independent examination. A leaflet will be posted through every door in the county about the consultation and how to comment on it.

There will be 23 drop-in events held across the county during the six week consultation, including an event at **Ponteland Memorial Hall on Saturday November 7th from 10am to 3pm** where county council staff will be available to answer questions about the core strategy and Ponteland masterplan.

Comments can be submitted:

Online

northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy

Email

planningstrategy@northumberland.gov.uk

Post

Planning and Housing Policy Team, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.

Following this consultation the core strategy is scheduled to be submitted to the Government in March 2016 for examination, with adoption expected in autumn 2016.



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VJ Day commemoration

By Donald F Lloyd

Acting Secretary, Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Some members of Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club felt that the 70th Anniversary of VJ Day on August 15th should not pass without some local act of recognition and remembrance of the sacrifices made by so many in the Far East.

Members of the club are known to have served in Burma but most have passed on sadly.

A few short prayers were offered and a few moments of silence observed, followed with the words of Laurence Binyon:

"They shall grow, not old as we who are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we shall remember them."

Club President Syd Cowan with members and their wives attended while Past President Harry Earp laid a wreath on behalf of the club.

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Platinum celebration for Jim and Joan

Ponteland couple Jim and Joan Thompson celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary in a special celebration with family members from across the UK.

Originally from Darlington, Jim had joined the RAF before WWII and was an aircraft fitter based near Christchurch and Joan was a local girl working in the wages department of Portsmouth Aviation.

Both keen dancers, they met at the local hop and courted to the music and rhythms of the big band sound. They married at Christchurch Priory on August 18th 1945 and honeymooned in the New Forest before Jim's return to Europe and posting to India later that year.

They lived in married quarters in Camberley and then in Halton, where their first son Jamie was born in 1952. Jim left the RAF in 1955 to join De Havilland in Hurn, and in 1959 their second son Frazer was born.

In 1962 the family moved to Ponteland, buying a house on the Wimpey estate at West Farm, after Jim was offered a job maintaining the executive aeroplane of Clarke Chapman at Newcastle Airport.

Third son Neil was born at home on Simonside View, where the couple still live, in 1962. Joan later returned to work, first at McCormick's greengrocers in the village and then in the offices of Newcastle ship's outfitters William Harkers.

Jim, now 93, retired in 1983 and took up golf, playing for many years in the seniors group at Parklands. The keen painter attends the U3A art group at Merton Hall. Joan, 89, loves to walk, especially at Belsay Hall, enjoys taking tea and lunch with friends and playing 'imagining' games with her beloved great-granddaughter Cleo, four.

The family celebration was held at Jamie's home in Whalton, with Jim and Joan's three sons, ten of their grandchildren and their great-granddaughter. Asked for the secret to a long and happy marriage, Joan said: "Never go to bed on an argument. Every night, kiss and say goodnight."





Photos by Trevor Walker

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Your letters

The Editor
Don't News & Views



A WWII veteran criticises the lack of an official VJ Day commemoration in Ponteland in this month's letters...

Veteran attacks lack of commemoration for VJ Day

It was only on Friday August 14th that I realised that no official commemoration was to take place the next day in Ponteland in respect of VJ Day.

As a former infantry officer (1944-1947) I contacted the Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club, of which I had been president in 1991, and attempted at very short notice to encourage a few members to a commemoration on Sunday August 16th.

I then purchased a wreath from the Royal British Legion agent in Prudhoe. As a result a group of members attended a brief ceremony and a wreath laying at the Cenotaph at the Memorial Hall, including the current President and Secretary.

It is extremely unfortunate that any campaign/war not taking place in Europe receives scant recognition – presumably a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'. The Burma Campaign fought mainly by the 'forgotten' British 14th Army suffered 90,332 killed, wounded or missing presumed dead.

How much longer the war would have lasted if the atom bombs dropped had not taken place with the resultant greater number of British losses is hard to estimate. The Japanese soldiers' culture is to fight to the death and never surrender.

Ironically, this lack of recognition of the Burma campaign is history repeating itself, especially as the country is commemorating the centenary of the ending of the First World War.

The war in Mesopotamia (renamed Iraq in 1933) against Germany's ally, the Ottoman/Turkish Empire, claimed 11,000 killed, 4,000 dying of wounds, 12,500 dying of sickness and disease, 51,000 wounded and 13,000 missing.

So far the media and press have to my knowledge totally ignored these losses in what was then a disease ridden hellhole with primitive medical facilities. My own father served there 1915-1919 and had his last malarial attack in 1935.

Henry Earp

Crossfell, Ponteland

(Editor's note: see article on p10)

Neighbourhood Plan Group's invite to concerned Medburn resident

After reading David Kinghorn's letter in the August issue re building houses in Medburn and seeing the responses in the following edition from John Hague and Coun Liz Thompson, Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is inviting Mr Kinghorn to our next meeting.

Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been formed to work on behalf of the Town Council in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the civil parish of Ponteland, which includes Milbourne, Medburn, Kirkley and Prestwick.

We have tried to engage resident support from the rural areas in the past with little success; we recognise the need for representatives from all parts of the parish to support current members of the PNPSG in the preparation of an emerging Neighbourhood Plan and to communicate our intentions to the residents.

This group was set up three years ago and has been preparing a long term plan for Ponteland (up to 2031) in line with the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. As you will be aware, Northumberland has not completed a new Local Plan, which has made things very difficult for PNPSG as the Neighbourhood Plan should aim to link into the forthcoming County Council Core Strategy.

One of the eight topic subgroups of the Neighbourhood Plan being prepared is for 'housing and affordable housing'. Members of PNPSG are trying to limit the number of new builds proposed for Ponteland civil parish (our designated area) in the NCC Plan as we genuinely feel there is little evidence of need for further housing in the Ponteland area. But we would eventually like to see smaller more affordable housing when the need is proven built in the right place at the right time.

Alma Dunigan

Chairman, Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Will recycling area get Royal assent?

The recycling area on Meadowfield Industrial Estate is close to the grandly named Royal Hampton apartments.

Call me a cynic, but I wonder how long it will be before the recycling will moved to the council house end of the carpark?

Anthony Ridley

Dunsgreen, Ponteland

Teenager's thanks for wallet return

I would like to say thank you to the couple that found my wallet on the school field as it must have dropped from my pocket while I was looking for the owner of a dog we had found walking around.

The couple are called Stephen and Helen Dobbison. The wallet had been purchased by my girlfriend for a special occasion and means a lot to me, and I am so thankful to them for traveling five miles from Ponteland and dropping it through my door.

They left a note with their name but no contact information, so I thought if they read this they could see how grateful I am.

Kieran Thompson

Deacon Close, Abbey Farm, Newcastle

November issue deadlines: Delivery of the November issue will start on Wednesday October 28th and be completed by Monday November 2nd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday October 12th. 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 November 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.

What's on...

Rugby World Cup day at the Diamond Inn

Sports fans are being invited to enjoy the Rugby World Cup at a special event being held at the Diamond Inn this weekend. The Rugby Club, in conjunction with the Diamond Inn, is organising a bash in a marquee in the rear car park at the Diamond on Saturday October 3rd, starting at 11am. There are three live games being shown on a big screen - Japan v Samoa kicks off at 2.30pm, Scotland v South Africa is at 4.45pm and England v Australia follows at 8pm. The Rugby Club is providing barbecue food within the ticket price of £7.50 per head or £20 for three tickets.

Ponteland NWT Group

Do you want to see more bees in your garden? Are you concerned about the loss of bees we are suffering? Come to the Church Hall on Tuesday October 6th at 7.30pm to hear Tony Milan from Askham Bryan College talk about 'Bee friendly gardening and how to help our Bumble Bees'. Entrance £2 - refreshments included.

Ponteland U3A

Speakers at the monthly meeting on Wednesday October 7th are Steve and Carol Robson. The group is called Fool's Gold and this is a musical presentation. 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 u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring the membership secretary on (01661) 822225. Our next meeting will be on November 4th.

Kirkley WI

Kirkley members will meet on Wednesday October 7th for their AGM. Northumberland Federation WI Advisor Kathleen Jones will attend. Following a reflection of the past year and review of future plans, officers will be elected. Kirkley WI usually meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm in the Oak Room at Kirkley Hall. New members and guests always welcome.

Plant Heritage North East Group

The new season starts with a talk by Jo Bennison on 'Peonies in the wild and the varieties available in the garden today' on Saturday October 10th at 2.30pm. Jo owns Bennison Peonies near Lincoln and has over 270 varieties growing on the site. She will be bringing plants for sale. Meetings are in the lounge at the Memorial Hall and visitors are welcome.

Memory Café

Based at Ponteland United Reformed Church on Broadway, Darras Hall, the Memory Café is a monthly initiative supported by local people who are working towards Ponteland becoming more understanding of dementia. Anyone who lives with memory problems or dementia is welcome, together with family members or friends. Tea, coffee and snacks are available for purchase in a relaxed setting, where you will also find a listening ear and resources to help. The next event is Monday October 12th from 10.30am to 12noon. Future dates: November 9th and December 14th. Supported by Ponteland Churches Together and Diagonal Alternatives.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday October 12th is Bernard Hope whose talk is entitled 'Eddie Chapman - North-East Double Agent'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday October 12th our guest speakers are Margaret and David Thorne, talking about 'Himalayan Highlights: Bhutan'. They are both enthusiastic and able plant hunters, in the European mountains and the mountainous areas of the Himalayas, Western China and Tibet. Our meetings take place in St Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland and 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 tel (0191) 4132574. Our Autumn Show is on Saturday October 10th from 9am to 4pm at Cowell's Garden Centre, Woolsington. Admission free.

Ponteland Village WI

We meet on the second Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. At our next meeting on October 13th we welcome Kenspeckle Chocolate who are kindly providing us with a delicious chocolate demonstration! For more information please contact us via email: pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or on our Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We meet every 2nd Wednesday in the month. On October 14th Patti Dawson (AD) of Penrith will demonstrate 'Variations of a Theme'. Visitors welcome £5 admission (including tea & biscuits/cake).

Friends of Kirkley Hall

Friends of Kirkley Hall are hosting two talks in the coming months. The first on Wednesday October 14th is at 7pm. Ornithologist Martin Davison will talk about the birds of Kielder Forest and his job surveying the forest for all the raptor and owl species, which have lived in the border forest over the past 25 years. On Wednesday November 18th at 2pm Dale Stevens, Assistant Head Gardener at Craggside, will speak about Craggside as it was and how it is cared for today. Both talks take place at Kirkley Hall and a charge of £5 is made to non-members. Bookings can be made by ringing Brenda Parke on (01661) 853489.

Bridge Drive

A Bridge Drive with prizes, raffle and afternoon tea will be held in Ponteland Memorial Hall on Thursday October 15th at 2pm in aid of Memorial Hall Funds. For tickets costing £8 call (01661) 823398 or (01661) 822603.

Ponteland

Embroiderers' Guild

Monday October 26th 'Land of the Far Horizons' - Heather Cowans (Wooler). 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.

Pont Charity Group concert

Pont Charity Group is holding a concert at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Saturday October 31st starting 7.30pm. Just 4 Men return by popular demand. Tickets costing £10 are for sale at Geoff Steven opticians, 25 Main Street, Ponteland, at Stait Photography, 4 Market Place, Morpeth, and online at Eventbrite. The entertainment includes a bar and raffle with proceeds to Tynedale Hospice at Home.

Audio Book Group

The group is for people who have visual impairment or face barriers in reading printed books. It is an opportunity to share books, listen to different authors or old favourites, and hear other people's views. Each month members take home an audio book, then return to the next meeting for an informal and relaxed discussion lead by the group leader. We meet at Ponteland Library on the first Monday of each month from 10.30am-12noon. Membership is free. Contact Ros.Markham@northumberland.gov.uk or (01661) 823594.

Ponteland Group of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month in St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm. The aims of the group are to bring together people interested

in wildlife and to raise funds for the Trust.

Rotary Club of Ponteland

Rotary Club of Ponteland meet every Tuesday at Ponteland Golf Club. The meetings alternate between lunch times (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) and evenings (2nd & 4th Tuesdays). New people of all age groups and both ladies and gentlemen are very welcome. If you would like more details please contact Alan Hall on 01661 860284 or email alanhalleef@msn.com.

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.

Wednesday evening bridge at Merton Hall

If you enjoy relaxed games of bridge, you will be welcome at Merton Hall each Wednesday from 7pm to 9pm until next Easter. You do not need to bring a partner. Why not come along to try us out? We play Acol and Chicago scoring.

Pont Badminton Club

Pont Badminton Club meets every Friday evening between 8.30pm and 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.

The Bridge @ Ponteland Methodist Church

The Bridge is a different kind of church service. We meet most Sundays in Ponteland Methodist Church Hall at 4pm. We are relaxed in style and relevant to life today. We are family friendly and there is Sunday School for kids up year 6. Everyone is welcome, whether you are a Christian or just want to find out more. For more info email thebridge.ponteland@gmail.com

Ponteland Runners

Interested in running, whether or not you currently do? Your local England Athletics affiliated running club welcomes runners of all abilities from 12 years of age upwards to its friendly, inclusive sessions which take place several times a week. Many of our 100+ members started at one of our short beginners' courses and the next of these gets under way on Wednesday evenings from the end of September. Find us on Facebook, on our website at pontelandrunners.org.uk or contact us at secretary@pontelandrunners.org.uk



Ten years bringing you the news



By Chris Jennings

Your community magazine Pont News & Views celebrates its 10th anniversary this month. And having had the pleasure of editing PNV for the past decade, I thought I'd indulge in a little look back at my own personal highlights.

The first issue back in October 2005 laid the marker for the quality, editorial-led publication the former Ponteland Parish Council and Ponteland Community Partnership wanted to produce for the community to replace the monthly Neighbourhood Watch bulletin and the Council's quarterly magazine.

It included articles on work starting on the new first school, progress on the build of a new health centre, the start of consultation on a village centre regeneration blueprint and our first what's on guide.

Since then we have covered all the major events and issues to affect the parish, from the flooding in September 2008 to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June 2012.

Successful community campaigns we have featured include the plans by O2 to build a phone mast outside Darras Hall First School in 2010, a controversial county council proposal to close Ponteland Sure Start Centre earlier this year and the high profile protest against green belt development at Birney Hill.

The wide variety of community events the parish enjoys, including the Party in the Park, Music in the Park, the Duck Race, Wheelbarrow Race, Flower Show and biennial Church Flower Festival, give us plenty of photographic opportunities.

The letters' page and What's On guide are never short of submissions, while other popular features include the police column. More recent additions have included the Ponteland Community High School Report, which has undoubtedly generated more interest among younger readers.

The former Parish Council supported the magazine financially at first from its publicity budget, but thanks to our advertisers PNV has been self-funding now for many years. So it truly is free to readers. Regular contributors, who take a great deal of time to pen articles and letters and submit photos, also deserve praise.

As Editor I have enjoyed the enduring support of the editorial board, comprising members of Ponteland Town Council and Ponteland Community Partnership – some of whom have been involved as volunteers since the launch in 2005.

But as we look forward to the next ten years, if you have any suggestions for improving your magazine, please email pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or write to Editor, Pont News & Views, 16 Sunnyside Lane, Cleadon Village, SR6 7XB. We will publicise any ideas put forward in the next issue.

10 years and 120 issues: Pont News Editor Chris Jennings with editorial board members Frank Harrington, Coun Robin Ramsay, Town Clerk Kath Mavin and Syd Cowan. Photo by Trevor Walker.



GRANT APPLICATION – ROTARY CLUB OF PONTELAND – CHRISTMAS MARKET IN PONTELAND

The Council agreed a £500 grant towards this event at Ponteland High School on December 5th.

REPLACEMENT OF BOARDWALK 2 IN THE PARK

The Council agreed to accept the lowest quote of £2,450 for the replacement of Boardwalk 2 in the Park, which would be met from the asset replacement fund.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS TO MRS JUNE ATKINSON

The Council agreed to formally record their thanks to Mrs Atkinson for her kind donation of a carved sculpture of an otter that had recently been installed in the Park. There had been many positive comments made about the sculpture which had been christened 'Tommy' after the sculptor. See article on p26.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed to the Highways Working Party recommendation to not proceed with the installation of bollards on Callerton Lane, which could have a detrimental effect on residents in the area. Members also approved the Local Transport Plan submission for 2016-17 for NCC which included three top priorities of raised bus stops along the A696 and main bus routes, new footpaths in a number of location on Darras Hall and examination of ways to improve the egress and ingress to Henderson Court off North Road.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed to the Environment Working Party recommendation of a sensory garden at Coates Institute to be tied in with any redesign of this area. Members also agreed to provide a memorial seat at Athol House in memory of Mary Short, who recently passed away.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Coun Dodd said he was continuing to lobby NCC officers on the abuse of the car park at the back of Merton Way. He also raised the issue of 'cold calling' that was becoming a problem particularly for

the older population and he felt that it may be necessary to generate some publicity on this issue so that people were aware of the potential problems this could cause for residents.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Vandalism

The Mayor referred to recent incidents of vandalism in Ponteland, stating that a log of incidents was being kept with details of costs involved. He intended to raise this with colleagues at the NALC County Committee to see whether other town and parish councils were experiencing similar problems and how they dealt with this. He hoped it could be examined at a county level.

Letter to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth

The Council agreed the content of a letter of congratulation to be sent to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth on her achievement of becoming this country's longest serving monarch.

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

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REOPENED AFTER REFURBISHMENT

The newly refurbished toilets on Thornhill Road were re-opened on Wednesday August 26th.

There are facilities in both for those with mobility problems and nappy changing facilities. The work was carried out over July and August by local firm Collingwood Construction.



HISTORIC ROAD SIGN REINSTATED

The mileage post on West Road opposite the entrance to Meadowfield Industrial Estate has been refurbished and re-installed.

This is the second road sign that the Town Council has refurbished and follows the first at Elm Road near to The Waggoner. The plan now is to replace the Mile sign at Higham Dykes on the A696 which has been destroyed.



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Growers produce the goods again at annual flower show

There were more entries and more attendees as the gardeners of Ponteland once again produced the goods at the annual Parish Flower Show.

Among the 132 classes displayed at the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 12th were impressive entries in the flowers, vegetables, fruit, children, cookery, handicrafts, art, wine, and photography categories.

The show, in its 38th year, now incorporates the North East Group of The Heather Society and Ponteland Memorial Hall Leek Club.

Show chairman Syd Cowan said: "Visitors were greeted by the best display of hanging baskets we have ever had. Ponteland Floral Art Club and Callerton Flower and Garden Club put on a beautiful floral exhibition entitled 'Summer Holiday' in the Memorial Hall lounge.

"There was a large entry in the wood carving classes and just when we thought photography had been taken over by mobile phones, the display boards were packed with entries. Our thanks goes again to the voluntary committee who put on the show each year."

For full results visit: www.pontelandflowershow.co.uk

Get your winter flu jab

Let Taylor's Pharmacy help you in the fight against flu.

The flu vaccine is the best protection we have against an unpredictable virus that can cause unpleasant illness in children and severe illness and death among at-risk groups, including older people, pregnant women and those with an underlying medical health condition.

Studies have shown that the flu jab does work and will help prevent you getting the flu. It won't stop all flu viruses and the level of protection may vary between people, so it's not a 100% guarantee that you'll be flu-free, but if you do get flu after vaccination it's likely to be milder and shorter-lived than it would otherwise have been.

The flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to children aged six months to two years at risk of flu, adults aged over 18 at risk of flu, and everyone aged 65 and over.

Pharmacist Jessica Taylor is administering flu vaccines from mid-September until December, with a no appointment walk-in service four days per week.

- Avoid waiting at your GP surgery
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- Private service also available – cost £12
- No appointment needed Wednesday to Saturday – just walk in
- Appointments available Monday and Tuesday

It takes between two to three weeks for the flu jab to become fully effective, so the earlier you get your jab the better!



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Ryan a double silver medal winner in World Transplant Games

A Ponteland teenager whose mum donated him a kidney in a lifesaving operation has won two silver medals in the World Transplant Games in Argentina.

Ryan Dobinson came second in the javelin and discus, narrowly missing out on a gold in the javelin final.

He was among more than 100 British sportsmen and women to return from South America with medals at last month's international event, which more than 800 athletes from 44 countries competed in.

The 20-year-old was born with kidney dysplasia, a debilitating condition caused by malformation during fetal development, which meant a childhood with regular hospital visits and a strict diet and medication regime.

But aged 15 his kidneys failed, and with a tissue match ratio of 1:20,000 his chances of receiving a kidney from the Organ Donor Register were slim. Fortunately his mum Gill was found in tests to be a 97% kidney match. However, they had a blood incompatibility which would cause instant rejection.

Doctors at Newcastle's RVI therefore undertook a pioneering procedure whereby Ryan had to have all of Gill's antibodies stripped from his system and his blood effectively 'washed' with plasma exchange and a high dosage of steroids prior to the transplant.

Ryan initially struggled after the operation as he was diagnosed with post operative diabetes and the huge amount of steroids he was given to prevent rejection caused him to grow very quickly.

But taking part in his first transplant games in Belfast in 2011 eight months after his operation, he met other children and young adults going through the same experience which gave him a huge boost.

Ryan, who lives with mum Gill and older brother Andrew, 24, at the family home in Elmwood Drive and works at the local Sainsbury's supermarket, has since competed in the Transplant Games in Sheffield in 2013 and at last year's event in Bolton he qualified for the World Transplant Games with a 31m javelin throw. He has also competed in archery, discuss, long jump and ball throw.

Ryan trains weekly at King Edward VI School in Morpeth with Sport England coach Hemant Desai, where he has thrown



Double silver medal winner: Ryan Dobinson with mum Gill Childs. Photo courtesy of ncjMedia Ltd.

beyond the javelin world record of 37m. As part of Team GB, Ryan also took part in four designated training days in Coventry in the run up to the Games, where he received additional coaching from Transplant Sport.

Gill, an employer engagement officer at Barnardo's, said: "Ryan did extremely well as he was at the lower range of his age group and missed out on his gold in javelin by less than half a metre! He is now focusing on the 2017 Games in Spain."

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Joan wins Darras Hall garden competition

Keen gardener Joan Hillman has been declared the new Gertrude Jekyll of Darras Hall, having designed and planted her award-winning garden from scratch.

Joan is the winner of the Darras Hall Estate Committee's contest for the most attractive garden on the 2,500-house estate, based on photographs submitted by residents themselves.

The Estate Committee organised the competition to celebrate the moniker ascribed to Darras Hall for more than a century as the "Garden City of the North".

This dates back to the formation of the Estate Committee and the creation of Darras Hall as a residential area with individual plots for houses of not less than a quarter of an acre.

At the same time Gertrude Jekyll was becoming recognised as arguably the world's most famous garden designer of her time with more than 400 horticultural creations throughout England, Europe and America.

Half a century later Joan and her late husband Peter bought one of the Darras Hall plots and moved from Benton into their new home at Green Acres, off Edge Hill. They seeded the entire plot, which was subsequently transformed into gardens with borders, bushes, plants and other features.

Joan was able to indulge in her passion for gardening, which had been nurtured many years before on the family allotment in Prudhoe, where she helped to grow fruits and flowers.

Now retired from her former job as a travel consultant for students and staff at Newcastle University, Joan is helped one day a week by her part-time gardener John, who does the "heavy work" for her, although she mows the lawns and tends to all of the flowers and plants by dead-heading, pruning, planting and cutting back.

Her cottage-style garden has evolved over more than half a century, and Joan was delighted to be told by the Estate Committee judges that her green-fingered efforts are a credit



A riot of colour: Barbara Munro's garden

to the community, displaying a riot of subtle colour and pastel shades throughout the seasons.

Another entry that caught the eye of the judges is the impressive garden of Anne and Philip Revill, who moved to their bungalow in Hawthorne Way from Derbyshire in 2008. Philip explains that the move was prompted by their jobs with the Inland Revenue, which leaves them with less time than they would ideally like for gardening.

However, Philip gives the credit for the attractive appearance of the gardens to Anne, who keeps them in shape, having rescued the plot from its former overgrown state when they moved in.

"It was very overgrown so there has been a lot of clearing, cutting back and restocking," says Philip, who describes the result as a typical English country garden.

Another of the three winners in the competition is Barbara Munro of Darras Road, whose beautiful garden is a riot of colour with petunia-laden hanging baskets, clematis-covered garden arches and borders stocked with lobelia, montbretia and butterfly-attracting buddleia among many others.

Darras Hall Estate Committee chairman Andrew Mate, said: "Residents are rightly proud of the area in which they are fortunate enough to live, which justly deserves its name tag of Garden City of the North.

"We know that there are some truly stunning gardens on the estate but many are hidden from view behind high hedges so we thought this competition would give proud owners a chance to share them with other residents.

"The competition has been done entirely through the Estate Committee website, with owners submitting their own photographs, and we are extremely grateful for the support of Cowell's Garden Centre and Ponteland Print for supplying the prizes."

Budding beauty queen Leah to represent the region in national pageant

Budding beauty queen Leah Middleton is to represent the North-East after winning the title Junior Miss Galaxy Newcastle.

Leah, 13, of Limestone Lane, Ponteland, will compete against 10 regional winners from across the country in the Junior Miss Galaxy UK final at the Park Hall Hotel in Lancashire, where she could win an all-expenses-paid trip of a lifetime to the grand final in Orlando, Florida.

The Ponteland High School Year 9 pupil has a busy few months ahead of her, fundraising and attending events for organisations including cancer charity The Christie as well as to pay for her costs to attend the UK final.

Leah's fundraising will include a two hour photoshoot for wannabe princesses, where girls can be photographed professionally in all their favourite outfits and accessories. The shoot, starting at 5pm on Friday October 9th at North Corner Studios, Ralph Street, Hebburn, is being managed by Leah's sponsor Imogen Kate Photography.

Mum Sarah, a business development consultant, said: "Leah has done amazingly well to get through to this stage – I am so proud of her."

If you would like your child to take part in the photoshoot (cost £10) contact Sarah at sarah.j@live.co.uk or on 07834 768961.



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REPORT OWNERS WHO FALL FOUL OF DOG REGULATIONS

Dog fouling is a problem that occurs on footpaths, school playing fields, sports fields, parks and other public places, when owners do not clear up after their dogs.

Dog fouling is a significant public health problem and a blight on the environment; the excrement can cover shoes, clothing and can even lead to blindness, due to an infection called Toxocara canis.

Northumberland County Council operates a zero-tolerance policy to dog fouling and a countywide dog control order makes it an offence to not immediately pick up after your dog has fouled on any publically accessible land anywhere in Northumberland.

Offenders can face an on the spot fine of £75 and if prosecuted, a fine of up to £1,000 if they fail to pick up after their dog(s). Owners are reminded that claiming ignorance of the dog's actions is not a valid defence.

Residents can use any bin to dispose of dog waste, not just specific dog bins. Picking up after your dog, or reporting those that don't, helps protect the environment for all.

Residents that want to help protect our environment can report offenders by contacting the county council on 0345 6006400 or the local number (01661) 520005. Alternatively they can make a report online via the council website at northumberland.gov.uk

Now open every Saturday morning

Patients can now book appointments on Saturday mornings following the appointment of dentist Neal McCormick to the Higgins & Winter team.

Neal will be available every Saturday from September 19th for both routine consultations and more complex dental work.

He joins dentists Kevin Higgins, Richard Winter and Emma Hand, surgeon Rob Banks, hygienist Jen Joynson and therapist Hayley Story, supported by the dedicated team of nurses and practice management staff.

Partner Kevin Higgins said: "We are already open from 8am from Tuesday until Friday for early morning appointments and late on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for evening consultations. With Neal joining us we can now also open every Saturday morning too.

"As well as offering a wide range of specialist dental and skin care treatments and affordable payment plans, we also have flexible opening hours to fit around our patients' busy working lives."

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New priest for Stamfordham Chapel

Father Alan MacKnight has taken up duties as Chaplain at St Francis Xavier Chapel, Cheeseburn Grange, Stamfordham.

Set back from the B6324 Stamfordham Road south east of the village in parkland, the Dobson designed chapel has for generations served the needs of the congregation from surrounding villages.

Born shortly before the Second World War in Howdon, the young Alan and his family were evacuated to Staward near Allendale where his grandmother lived. His father had to stay at home but every weekend he cycled to Staward to see his family before returning for work.

Alan's early schooling was at Langley, near Haydon Bridge, until it was judged safe enough to return to Howdon and school at Willington. From his Primary School Alan passed a scholarship and went to St Cuthbert's Grammar School in Newcastle. This necessitated a lengthy trolley bus ride there and back.

After sitting "O" Levels Alan entered Ushaw College near Durham to study to become a priest. The course of studies lasted nine years whereupon Alan was ordained as a priest in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Appointments to various churches as an assistant priest followed, including a period at St Mary's Cathedral in Newcastle. Later, while serving in Peterlee, the opportunity arose to serve as a Missionary in Kenya and Father Alan spent six years helping to establish various parishes.

On his return Father Alan was appointed Parish Priest in Lemington where he stayed for 13 years. Then came a number of years in Longbenton where in addition to his parish duties Alan was the Roman Catholic Chaplain in the RVI and Freeman hospitals.

Officially retiring in 2011, Father Alan provided "supply" assistance to St. Mary's Cathedral and to Churches in the Tyneside area whenever a need arose through sickness or holiday arrangements.

Father Alan will shortly be taking up residence in Stamfordham and is looking



forward to getting to know people in the area and extends an invitation to people of all denominations (and none) to come to an 8.30am service on a Sunday on a regular or one-off basis.



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Floral displays win five gold medals

The team behind Ponteland's Northumbria in Bloom bid is celebrating after winning five gold medals and three silver gilts.

For the fourth year running Ponteland has secured the coveted gold award in the 'small towns' category.

The other gold awards were:

- Blackbird Inn - pubs and hotels
- Peel House Apartments - residential communities
- Athol House - care/residential/convalescent homes, day centres and hospices
- Prestwick Business Park – business parks.

Silver gilts went to Ponteland Bowling Green and Tennis Courts (sports grounds), Prestwick Allotments (allotments) and the Diamond Inn (pubs and hotels).

Ponteland was one of 61 villages, towns and cities visited by Northumbria in Bloom judges in the spring and summer. The results were announced at a prestigious awards ceremony held for the first time in Berwick upon Tweed, with the prizes awarded by Sir Alan Beith, the town's recently retired MP.

Deputy Mayor Coun Joyce Butcher, chairman of Ponteland's Northumbria in Bloom committee, said: "We are delighted to have returned with so many medals, including gold for Ponteland in the small town category for the fourth year running.

"I'd like to thank the Council's contractors Iain, Michael, Derek and Jim and all the volunteers and sponsors who have given their free time and money to make the parish look so special this year."



Photos by Trevor Walker

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Ponteland ladies triumph in county bowls

By Muriel Sobo

Ponteland Bowls Club probably has the best bowling green in the county so it is good to know that the ladies can beat the opposition and bring home the prizes.

The County 2 Wood Champion of Champions and the Benevolent Triples were both won by Ponteland Ladies. They were presented at their end of season 'jolly' played on a glorious afternoon with the men.

Pictured (l-r) are: Pam Varley - 2 Wood Champion of Champions, Alley Storey, Ladies' Captain Liz Cowings, Gloria Stapleton and Mary Robinson, who won the Triples with Alley.



Memorial sculpture celebrates return of otters to park



A new sculpture has appeared in Ponteland Park to give pleasure to residents and visitors alike.

The Town Council and Friends of Ponteland Park graciously accepted Otter in Oak, created by the well-known chainsaw artist Tommy Craggs of Consett.

The work was commissioned by June Atkinson in memory of her husband Leonard, who died in 2013.

As they both loved wildlife, this sculpture, which required a two-year consultation with the Town Council and the Friends of Ponteland Park, seems an appropriate gift to celebrate the return of otters to the River Pont.



Ponteland High School A Specialist Language College

Parents: find out why we believe our school is right for your child.

We guarantee you a warm welcome and an interesting time at our:

Yr 8 Open Days

Monday 28 September, Tuesday 29 September, Wednesday 30 September and Thursday 1 October - 10am to 11.30am

Yr 8 Open Evening

Thursday 1 October - 6.30pm to 8pm

Ponteland High School has...

- consistently excellent achievement at GCSE and A level
- a varied and extensive extra-curricular programme
- lots of overseas visits available
- a focus on the student as a whole person
- a positive home-school relationship.

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

For more information visit: **www.ponthigh.org.uk**
or contact us on **01661 824711 ext. 201**



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CLASSIC MENU - 19.95 per person

Start with our Chef's selection of popular Street Snacks including samosas, onion bhaji bites and Kolhapuri chillies. Followed by your choice of our Curry House Classics from a mildly spiced Korma to a fiery Vindaloo. Served with sides including Bombay Aloo, steamed Basmati rice and naan bread.



SIGNATURE MENU - 24.95 per person

Enjoy our Chef's selection of Signature starters including specialities from the tandoor like Prawn Ajwaini and Seekh Gilafi. This is followed by your choice from our Signature curries which include the ever popular Railway Lamb Curry made with slow braised Northumbrian lamb and our delicately spiced Goan King Prawns. Served with sides including Bombay Aloo, Dal Makhani, Basmati Pilau and a basket of assorted naans.



Both menus are served with poppadums and a selection of our delicious homemade chutneys.

The Classic and Signature Christmas menus are a treat for the tastebuds so don't delay and book today.

PRIVATE DINING AVAILABLE

For more intimate gatherings, Haveli boasts a 14 seat private dining room where guests will receive personal attention from their own dedicated wait staff.



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