

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



New 'community campus'
to open in 2019

Darras Hall restaurant gets
Michelin recommendation

Vandals cause £5,000
damage at cricket club

Marathon effort raises £16,000 for air ambulance



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Welsh growers take top prizes at alpine show

Wales scored another victory over England as exhibitors from across Great Britain competed at the Alpine Garden Society's autumn show.

After 15 years at Ponteland Memorial Hall, the last national alpine show of the year was held at Cowell's Garden Centre in Woosington on Saturday October 10th.

The 45 exhibitors, who came from as far afield as Norfolk, South Wales and Scotland, staged more than 420 mountain and woodland plants.

The major trophy of the show, the Ponteland Bowl, was won by Bob and Rannveig Wallis from Carmarthen who secured the most

points, while Keith and Rachel Lever of Aberconwy made it a Welsh double, winning 'best plant in show' with their *Gaultheria crassa* 'John Saxton'.

Show secretary Alan Newton, who was narrowly beaten again to the top prize, said: "The turnout was excellent – exhibitors ended up using the centre's overflow car park. The staff at Cowell's worked very hard to set up staging and the lighting was excellent. The six nurseries selling plants also did very well and had very little left to take away with them."



Police step up patrols to catch burglars

PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Rural Neighbourhood Beat Manager



During September there were 13 crimes recorded for the Ponteland parish area.

These break down to the following offences:

- Two burglary other than dwelling (Stamfordham)
- One burglary to stables (Medburn)
- One theft from motor vehicle (Ponteland Leisure Centre)
- One theft (Ponteland Social Club)
- One theft by employee (Matfen)
- One damage to motor vehicle (Stamfordham)
- One damage to public toilets (Merton Way)
- Two assaults (Diamond Inn)
- One breach of order (Ponteland)
- Two shoplifting (Sainsbury's and Waitrose).

A male was arrested and cautioned for the Matfen theft and a female has been arrested regarding the Waitrose theft and charged to appear in court.

Historically, due to the onset of the darker days and nights, there is an increase in

house burglaries at this time of year, when opportunist thieves seek out and target potentially vulnerable properties.

Local neighbourhood officers are taking action to help prevent burglaries by carrying out targeted patrols in the area to provide visibility and reassurance to residents, and sending letters offering support and advice to previous burglary victims.

There are simple steps residents can take which can make a big difference. It is vital that homeowners carry out regular reviews on their home security, specifically to make sure that they lock doors and secure windows, not just on their houses but also sheds and garages, especially overnight or when not at home. It is also really important residents watch out for their neighbours and report any suspicious activity to police straight away.

Local residents may be aware of the local Community Speedwatch scheme which is very active in the area.

The scheme is made up of local residents, who volunteer to address speeding

concerns in the local area. Vehicles are monitored at strategic roadside locations and offending motorists may receive a warning letter or in some cases, a visit from the police.

Throughout September CSW volunteers have devoted their time at a number of locations monitoring in excess of 600 vehicles, and 55 motorists have been sent warning letters for excess speed.

Local police surgeries will be held on the following dates:

- Saturday 31st October – 9.30am to 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland - CSO Paul Cotterill
- Saturday 14th November 10am to 11am Coop, Broadway - PC Lee Davison
- Saturday 14th November 11.30am to 12.30pm Belsay Shop - PC Lee Davison

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



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Ponteland Community High School Report

Marathon effort raises £16,000 for air ambulance

Forty students and teachers have raised £16,000 for the Great North Air Ambulance Service after completing a half marathon in memory of a former pupil who died in a car crash.

Ponteland High School launched the "Run for Rachel" appeal in tribute to Rachel Blaylock, 18, who was killed when the car she was travelling in hit a tree on the A696 in August last year.

Rachel, a keen runner from Milbourne, had been due to take part in the 2014 Great North Run, and the staff and students took part in this September's event with the aim of raising £10,000 for the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

GNAAS played a role in the rescue attempt of another Ponteland student, Victoria Wilkinson, 17, who was killed in a boating accident, along with her father, at Kielder Water in 2009.

The "Run for Rachel" team smashed their target, raising £16,005. And in a show of appreciation, the air ambulance dropped in



to visit the school.

Liam Martin, of GNAAS, said the money would be spent on providing life-saving care in the region: "The school should be so proud of what they have achieved. It was clear from the outset that they were all pulling in the same direction in memory of Rachel. To have raised such an amount is an incredible achievement."

PE teacher Gordon Grier, the driving force behind the fundraising campaign, added: "It was something really tragic that started this off. We wanted to do something positive in the name of a former student who represented everything we have done. We were fighting for a cause we believe in, we wanted to bring people together, and we were passionate about doing it. That's what Rachel was all about."

Georgia wins four medals at Commonwealth Youth Games

England swimmer Georgia Darwent returned from the Commonwealth Youth Games in Samoa with four medals.



The Year 13 student picked up a gold, silver and two bronze medals on the Pacific island after a ten day training camp in New Zealand with the England swimming team, who finished second behind Australia on the final medals table.

Georgia scored a PB as she won gold in the 800m freestyle, adding a bronze in the 400m freestyle, a silver in the 4x200m freestyle team relay and bronze in the 4x100m freestyle team relay.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "Georgia is a very modest young woman who is full of talent, which she combines with a fierce drive and determination to succeed. We are very proud of her achievements and know that she has a bright future in the sport."

School to host new Christmas market

Ponteland High School is hosting a family Christmas market in a new joint initiative with the Rotary Club.

The event is being held on Saturday December 5th from 12noon until 5pm and there will be lots of stands and displays including hot food, mulled wine, Christmas carols, Christmas cards, Santa's Grotto and other Christmas gifts.



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New schools, leisure centre and fire station to open in 2019

A 'community campus' with new high, middle and first schools, indoor and outdoor leisure facilities and a new fire station will open in 2019 under plans revealed by Northumberland County Council.

The masterplan for the 70-hectare triangle bordered by Callerton Lane, Mayfair Gardens, Fairney Edge, Cheviot View and Rotary Way in Ponteland envisages the new build to the east of the site, freeing up the western side for a mixed use housing and employment area.

Once the campus is open the current Ponteland High and Ponteland Middle schools, leisure centre and fire station will be demolished and the site cleared to make way for 400 new homes and a one hectare office development, not expected to be built before 2021.

Darras Hall First School will also be relocated to the new campus, although the future plan for the existing site on Broadway has not yet been revealed.

The housing would be in two areas – the current leisure centre site and the schools site – divided by an existing bridleway and with separate access points, but linked by new footpaths. The office development would be situated on the site of the relocated fire station.

Vehicular access to the new housing would be from Callerton Lane, whilst entry to the school would be from a remodelled Ponteland Road/Rotary Way roundabout.

Additional planting is proposed to the rear of Cheviot View to help screen the new development from the view of existing properties, along the course of the Fairney Burn, and also for the housing development's western boundary to create

a continuous landscape buffer along Callerton Lane.

As revealed in last month's issue, NCC has increased the indicative allocation for housing in Ponteland for the period 2011 to 2031 in its revised Northumberland Local Plan Pre Submission Core Strategy and the accompanying Ponteland Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by over 40 per cent to 900 new homes, including 126 which have already been built.

The others will be built on the former police headquarters site (310 homes) and on a new area of land allocated between Callerton Lane and Willow Way (180 homes).

A five hectare site just off the airport roundabout will also be safeguarded for the relocation of Meadowfield industrial estate.

With the Clickemin Farm site no longer released for housing and retained as green belt, big question marks have been raised 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.

In addition, the revised strategy no longer safeguards land in the north west of Ponteland (behind Ladywell Way/Kirkley Drive and at Eland Green) for future development, retaining it as green belt.

There is no detail at this stage on how the community campus would be financed, other than from receipts from the land sale. However, each school has drafted an 'Educational Brief' to be included in an 'Outline Business Case' to be taken to the Council's Cabinet for review in early 2016. Parents of pupils at the three schools have also been written to.

Green belt campaigners attack 'unrealistic housing numbers'

Green belt campaigners have reacted angrily to the increased housing allocation. Tony Noble, chairman of Ponteland Green Belt Group, said: "We are disappointed that Northumberland County Council has not engaged with the Neighbourhood Plan Group or Ponteland Town Council when preparing the SPD.

"We are also disappointed that the Council continues with its overambitious housing numbers. It is the unrealistic housing numbers that is driving the unnecessary release of green belt land in Ponteland.

"We would stress again that the 900 housing allocation for Ponteland indicated in the latest NCC document is a minimum figure. We believe the true housing number in Ponteland for the plan period will be close to 2,000 if not more. This represents a population increase of over 28% with no plans included for any increase in infrastructure to cope with the increase in population."

Council could miss Government deadline for Local Plan, claims MP

MP Guy Opperman has also voiced concerns, claiming the local community had not been listened to and faced up to 2,000 new homes. And in a fresh attack he said the authority ran a 'real risk' of missing the 2017 deadline for completing its local development plan, threatening Government intervention.

The MP said: "Northumberland's Local Plan process has been repeatedly dogged by delays and is now one of a small number of councils in the country not to have adopted a local plan. It is estimated once a local plan is submitted it can take up to 15 months before it is approved and

able to be adopted. NCC is not expected to submit its local plan for inspection until early next year which means there is now a very real risk that the council will miss the deadline altogether."

Opposition leader Coun Peter Jackson added: "It would be a huge failure if the county council was not even capable of putting together its own planning policies. Local people will rightly question what they actually get for their council tax if the council can't even do this most basic of tasks and it risks further delay at the public examination by sticking dogmatically to excessive and unsubstantiated house building numbers."

Coun Allan Hepple, NCC cabinet member responsible for economic growth, rejected

the claims, saying that despite the "complex and resource intensive" nature of the exercise and the council's five rounds of public consultation he believed the core strategy would be in place by the end of 2016.

He said: "We want to work pro-actively with our communities and not rush to a plan that is going to have a major impact on the county for years to come."

Responding to the Green Belt Group comments, an NCC spokesperson said: "Officers have met with representatives of the town council and neighbourhood plan group on two occasions, in August and September, when elements of the SPD and the indicative masterplan were shared,

and comments invited. At a further meeting this week the representatives will be updated on the school and leisure proposals.

"The master planning isn't complete yet and the document makes it clear that as work evolves there will be further consultation. The continued involvement of the town council and neighbourhood plan group are welcomed."

A Ponteland Town Council spokesperson added: "Ponteland Town Council has written to the County Council to affirm that the Town Council has not been involved in preparing the SPD."

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.



Vandals trash cricket club nets

Mindless vandals have caused £5,000 of damage to training equipment at Ponteland Cricket Club.

They tried to set fire to the all weather net facility and sight screens on Friday September 18th after earlier damage caused during the summer by groups of youths climbing on the equipment and using it as a trampoline.

Club chairman Andrew Morgan said: "It is very disheartening - this is not the first time we have been targeted by vandals. The police have been informed and we can only hope that we find those responsible."

The cricket club, founded in 1880, has played at the leisure centre since it opened in the late 1960s. It is run by volunteers and has five senior teams and four junior teams from the age of ten to 18, with beginner sessions for younger children. The nets are used throughout the summer months by all junior members.

It is hoped the cost of replacing the damaged equipment will be covered by insurance.

COMMUNITY TRUST INVITES RESIDENTS TO FIRST AGM

A trust set up last year to oversee community development projects is inviting residents to attend its first AGM.

The Ponteland Community Trust board comprises residents, town councillors and charity representatives who act as unpaid volunteers.

They are: Chairman Coun Peter Cowey; Treasurer Brian Russell; Secretary Peter Sutcliffe; Coun Lesley Noble; Andy Anderson (Ponteland Lions); Brian Prickett (Ponteland Community Partnership); Alan Hall (Ponteland Rotary Club); and resident David Butler.

Suitably qualified residents who would like to join the board can complete an application form at the AGM, which is being held at Ponteland High School on Tuesday November 24th at 7pm. All are welcome.

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Kirkley Hall named best wedding venue in the North-East

Kirkley Hall has been named the best wedding venue in the region in the North of England Wedding Awards.

The prestigious accolade was announced during a gala dinner ceremony at York Racecourse in association with The Wedding Guide UK.

The awards reward client service excellence and recognise businesses that go the extra mile for their customers, providing outstanding service and inspiring their customers to actively promote them.

Entrants were judged on customer reviews across a number of areas including service excellence, product quality, value for money and outstanding commitment. Other venues included Beamish Hall, The Alnwick Garden, Wynyard Hall and the Vermont Hotel.

Judges included Alison Wren of Paprika Marketing, Tricia Sheriff of She Loves York, wedding services provider Laura Murray and Jemma Cochrane, of Chair Covers of Yorkshire.

Nick and Grace Charlton, who married at Kirkley Hall in August 2014, said: "We received amazing service and quality throughout our wedding planning and especially on the day. The staff, from Wayne (planner) to the bar staff, were all excellent and made us



feel very special. The food was also amazing and we had lots of compliments from guests."

The Grade II listed venue has several function rooms available for weddings which look out onto an Italianate patio and the beautiful grounds and gardens of the 17th century rural estate. The last year has seen a record number of weddings – 82 – at Kirkley Hall.

Wayne Vickers, General Manager, Kirkley Hall Ltd, said: "We are completely overjoyed by this fantastic achievement. Competition in our category was very strong, seeing us up against some extremely well established and credible venues, so we were honoured to make it through as a finalist. To go on and win the award was unbelievable."



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Your letters

Calls for a Ponteland bypass and a pedestrianised town centre in this month's letters...

Two crashes in 10 days reinforce need for bypass

After walking my two young children to school on the morning of September 8th and returning home along North Road I was horrified to see police cars, crowds and an overturned car situated on the narrow pavement in front of my house.

The traffic was slow moving all morning and I was struck with the thought of my two children being under the car at the time of the accident - something that could realistically happen.

There was then another serious car collision accident on September 18th just at the Blackbird Inn where the road narrows due to the church cemetery, with both cars being unrecognisably crushed.

This road is becoming notorious for accidents and the stress it is under from A1 traffic is tremendous. The paths each side are far too narrow for pedestrians and in places you have to step into the road to let prams past.

These are not high speed collisions but are caused by high traffic volumes on roads and pavements that are unsuitable.

I would like to send the message that unless changes are made to reduce the number of vehicles passing through Ponteland, to increase the safety of the pedestrian paths and to reduce the speeds which some vehicles travel along these roads, there will be pedestrian and driver deaths.

With two accidents in two weeks (and many others in the past) I urge the council to further support the safety of our pedestrians and especially Ponteland's young children who will be our future. Infrastructure changes need to happen before there are fatalities. I urge that a Ponteland bypass is again considered.

Grant Wheatley
North Road
Ponteland

Wouldn't a pedestrianised Ponteland town centre be great

There has been a lot of discussion about the Core Strategy and the long term future of Ponteland.

I have a dream - wouldn't it be nice if you could walk directly from:

- Merton Hall to the Memorial Hall
- Barclays Bank to Waitrose
- St Mary's Church to the park
- the Diamond to the Post Box
- the Tennis Club to Merton Way shopping centre

...but without the fear of traffic and having to negotiate a busy road!

In other words a completely pedestrianised Ponteland centre. Yes, it's a dream but as a long term vision and objective wouldn't it be great?

'Failing to plan is planning to fail' and we know how long things take so plan for it now.

Peter Sutcliffe
Middle Drive
Darras Hall

December issue deadlines: Delivery of the December issue will start on Monday November 30th and be completed by Friday December 4th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday November 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 December 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 Wildlife Group

Ponteland Wildlife Group has arranged for Naomi Waite, Conservation Officer of Northumberland Wildlife Trust to talk about the national project, Magnificent Meadows, on Tuesday November 3rd at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road.

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on Wednesday November 4th is Barry Mead and his topic is 'Pompeii and Herculaneum'. We meet in St Mary's Church Hall at 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Visitors are welcome. No charge. See u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring the membership secretary on (01661) 822225. Our following meeting will be on December 2nd.

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 November 9th from 10.30am to 12noon, followed by December 14th. Supported by Ponteland Churches Together and Diagonal Alternatives.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday November 9th is Prof Richard Madeley whose talk is entitled 'Mine's bigger than yours'. 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 November 9th we are delighted to welcome our guest speaker Pat Craven, whose talk will cover alpine plants from 'Kazakhstan: from the Tien Shan to the Altai'. He will provide two slideshows showing Gentiana from the Kazakhstan region. He is a member of the Fritillaria group and manages the seed exchange. Our meetings take place in St Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 4132574.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday November 10th our meeting is entitled 'WWI, WI Centenary

& Me' - an evening celebrating and remembering 100 years of the Women's Institute. We are a warm and friendly WI and welcome new members and visitors for a girly night with a difference. We meet on the second Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Contact us at pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or see our Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We meet every 2nd Wednesday in the month. On November 11th at 2pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall there will be a tombola, raffle, plants, wood turning, cake stall, beads, tea/coffee and biscuits. Floral demonstration by Vanessa Wellock of Ilkley entitled 'Christmas by Design'. Admission: visitors £7, members £2.

Ponteland Business Network

Ponteland Business Network's next three business breakfast meetings will be at the usual venue, the Diamond Inn, from 7.45am to 9.45am on Friday November 13th, Friday December 11th and Friday January 15th. All local businesspeople who live or work within the NE20 and NE18 postcodes are welcome to join. The £10 cost includes a bacon butty or croissant and tea/coffee. For more information contact Brian Russell at pbn@profitabilitygroup.co.uk

Friends of Kirkley Hall

Friends of Kirkley Hall host a talk on Wednesday November 18th at 2pm by Dale Stevens, Assistant Head Gardener at Craggside, who will speak about Craggside as it was and how it is cared for today. The talk takes 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.

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

Monday November 23rd - Christmas Workshop with Jane Penny of Stocksfield. Meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road on the 4th Monday of each month from 2pm to 4pm. There is no meeting in December. You can become a member or join us for a meeting as a visitor (£4). Contact eg_ne_ponteland@btinternet.com or (01661) 881395.

Ponteland Civic Society

The next meeting of Ponteland Civic Society will be on Monday November 30th in St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm. We welcome the return of Jules Brown whose talk is entitled 'Coquet Island: Conserved for All; Reserved for One'. He will describe

the North East Civic Trust project to examine the monastic cell on Coquet Island and identify the funding for its consolidation. Visitors are most welcome, for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

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 Ladies' Choir

Are you interested in joining a friendly group of singers with a young, enthusiastic conductor? We meet at Ponteland Methodist Church on Mondays from 7.15pm to 9pm in term time. No audition needed. Contact Brenda on (01661) 821704 or Rosie on (01661) 871663.

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.

Ponteland Village Bridge Club

Would you like a friendly game of bridge? Ponteland Village Bridge Club meet every Friday evening in Merton Hall at 7pm. We play 20 boards of relaxed duplicate bridge. If you don't have a partner you can still come along, please telephone Pete Ford our Chairman on 07739 208308 and if possible he will fix you up with a partner.

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

Looking for church with a difference? The Bridge is relaxed, friendly and relevant. We could be what you are looking for! We meet most Sundays at 4pm in Ponteland Methodist Church Hall. Everyone welcome. Refreshments and kids activities provided. Services in November: 1st (youth service followed by pizza), 15th, 22nd, 29th For more info find us on Facebook, email thebridge.ponteland@gmail.com or phone (01661) 822057.

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. Find us on Facebook, at pontelandrunners.org.uk or contact us at secretary@pontelandrunners.org.uk



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SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER

10AM - 12NOON

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Please come along and join us!



PUBLIC QUESTION

A question was put to the Council from a resident regarding concerns about school traffic and also the car parking situation in Ponteland. The resident asked the Town Council to lobby the County Council as Highways Authority to take action before someone was seriously injured or worse. The Mayor assured the resident that the Highways Working Party would consider the comprehensive information she had supplied but reiterated that highways was an NCC responsibility.

ANNUAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2014-15

The completed Annual Audit return had been received from the Council's external auditors which raised an issue relating to reserves which had to be taken into account when determining the budget and precept. The Council agreed to incorporate consideration of the general reserves during the budget process in December/January and approved the Annual Return.

OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING EVENING BUS SERVICE TO AND FROM NEWCASTLE

It was reported that NCC had recently reviewed their provision of bus services throughout Northumberland and one of the main changes for Ponteland related to the 74 service. This would involve the withdrawal of the evening services to and from Newcastle on Friday to Sunday inclusive. This was to have been introduced from 8 October however NCC had agreed to delay this until December. This affected several other town and parish areas along the route. County councillor Jones is in discussions with these councils to see if any contributions could be made to provide some sort of service.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Highways Working Party met on September 11th and the Council deferred a decision regarding future expenditure on historic mileage signs to the November meeting of the Working Party.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on September 14th and the Council agreed its recommendations for works to be carried out at the Guardians Court Play area, including the replacement of the existing seat, cleaning of the asphalt area, replacing grassed areas with gravel chippings and repainting the railings. The Council also agreed a builder should be asked to look at the stone walls and repoint as necessary. A price would also be sought to clean the brick walls and replace any damaged bricks.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Coun Dodd asked for information from the Council about responses to planning issues which he would take up with the relevant NCC officers. He reported that the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft was out for consultation from October 14th to November 25th. There was a drop-in session planned for the Memorial Hall on November 7th when there would be information on display regarding the education and leisure proposals. He also stated that he continued to have discussions with officers regarding the car parks at the back of Merton Way. There were some cars which were parked there on a permanent basis. He also reported that the decision on the proposed move of County Hall to Ashington would be made soon.

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

B&B bid rejected

Plans to convert two semi-detached houses into a B&B facility which opponents claimed would attract boisterous hen and stag parties have been refused for a fourth time.

Permission had been granted for a 20-bed establishment in 2006 for Medwyn/Westmacot in Street Houses, Ponteland, but this attracted complaints from nearby residents as it was largely unsupervised.

Plans lodged to redevelop the site – in 2013 for a three storey 46-bed hotel, in 2014 for a two storey 14-bed hotel, and in May this year for a 13-bed B&B facility – were all rejected by Northumberland County Council.

The application in May was refused with reasons given being inappropriate development in the green belt, inadequate car parking and manoeuvring, and insufficient information on whether any protected species are present on the site.

The latest bid submitted in July by Andrew Singh, of Runnymede Road, which increased the number of car parking spaces from 13 to 14, generated eight letters of objection from local residents and Ponteland Civic Society.

Refusal reasons given again included inappropriate development in the green belt and insufficient information to assess whether protected species are present.

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Question Time comes to Ponteland

Question Time came to Ponteland as a panel fronted by MP Guy Opperman debated political issues of the day with an audience of all ages.

The event, held at the Memorial Hall, was organised by Ponteland Community Partnership as part of its efforts to get younger people involved in local democracy.

The opposition leader of Northumberland County Council Coun Peter Jackson, Ponteland Mayor Coun Carl Rawlings and students Elliot Barker, Michael Dwyer and

Molly Hall also joined the panel. Other guests included Sarah Parkes from charity UK Youth and Jon Niblo, chief executive of Northumberland Clubs for Young People.

Questions debated with a vibrant audience aged from ten to senior citizens included the cost of higher education, lowering the voting age to 16 and the lack of a voice for young people.

Mr Opperman said: "The democracy event was a fantastic way to relaunch Ponteland Community Partnership. It brought together people from across the community and it was great to debate

and discuss ideas with the audience and the superb student panel from the high school. I look forward to seeing the community partnership grow and I will support its important work in making sure the community's voice is heard in Ponteland."

Seven students involved in the event have undertaken training under a Cabinet Office sponsored scheme to become Democracy Champions, and have set up a Youth Forum to influence both Ponteland Community Partnership and the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan.

Photos by Trevor Walker



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Tickets now on sale for Pont Rep's latest show Oliver!



Ponteland Repertory Society has gathered together a wonderful cast this season to present to you Lionel Bart's much loved musical 'Oliver'!

We are delighted to welcome William Aycliffe from Scots Gap and Cameron Davison from Consett, who share the role of Oliver. They will be joined by Ponteland High School students Andrew Potter as the Artful Dodger and Hannah Elliott as Bet. Welcome also to Andrew Vine as Bill Sikes.

William played the giant in 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and Angel Gabriel at Cambo First School, and the king in 'Aladdin' at Chantry Middle School. Cameron has played a number of roles including Gav Roche in 'Les Miserables', the scarecrow in 'The Wizard of Oz' and Samuel in 'Pirates of Penzance'.

Playing the roles of Fagin and Nancy are Jonny Woollett and Lucy Walton. Jonny, from Cramlington, works for Waterstones

and Lucy Walton has just completed her A Levels at Ponteland High School.

Since joining the Rep in 2013 they have played the parts of Jo Jo Jangles and Fairy Flutter in 'Sleeping Beauty' and appeared in John Godber's play 'Teechers' and in the WWI musical 'Oh What A Lovely War!' Lucy also played Alice Fitzwarren in 'Dick Whittington and his Cat'.

The Preppies, the Rep's Youth Theatre, now boasts more than 40 members and they will also take part in Oliver! which is being directed by Carole Davies with Deborah Barry as musical director.

Oliver! runs from Wednesday November 25th to Saturday November 28th at 7pm, with a Saturday matinee at 2pm, at the Memorial Hall in Ponteland. You can reserve your tickets online at pontelandrep.co.uk following the links to Ticketsource to choose your own numbered tickets, costing £8 for adults and £6 for under-16s.



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YOUNG GOLFERS REPRESENT THE REGION

Young golfers from Ponteland represented the region at an event in Leeds after winning the Northumberland Junior Golf League and a regional qualifier.

The team won the league in a play-off final at City of Newcastle on July 26th, qualifying for the county regional finals against Close House, Brampton and Teesside at Rockcliffe Hall on September 27th which they also won.

Then on Sunday October 18th they competed at the Northern Semi Final in Leeds, but sadly did not qualify for the winners' trip to Spain.

The team members, aged 15 to 18, are: Jack Wright; Joseph McStravick; Ben Good; Max Bromley; John McStravick; Patrick Allsop; Elliot Barker and James Mole. They are coached by Ponteland's PGA Professional Richard Robson Crosby.

As winners, Ponteland will host the NJGL Annual Prize Giving in November, when the team will receive their league trophy.

Simon McStravick, Junior Liaison Officer at Ponteland Golf Club, said: "They are the best group of individuals playing junior golf in Northumberland currently in my opinion, and there can be no higher praise than that."

Refurbished milestones go back to the days of the turnpike

By Muriel Sobo

The Town Council has overseen a superb refurbishment of Ponteland's three milestones, which date back to the days of the turnpike.

The first is on Cheviot View, shortly after the Dobbie's roundabout, and it was quite badly damaged.

The second is the one next to Strettle's premises on the West Road which has been reset to show its full height and the

third is again on the left side of the road just past The Waggon. This was obscured by trees and vegetation but has been well displayed and renewed now.

The milestones were compulsory on these roads to help coaches keep to schedule and charging for changes of horses at coaching inns.

The first Act of Parliament for the Ponteland Turnpike was passed in 1749 and it lasted till 1881 when the tolls were abolished and the wooden railing across

the road from the Toll Bar to the School Wall was removed.

The present 'Toll House' by the bridge is a misnomer since it was never a toll house but was previously used as a butcher's killing shop. The toll house would have been in the middle of the road, probably where the mini-roundabout is now.

Does anyone have a photo or drawing of the original Toll House? I'm researching this turnpike and would welcome any pictures or information.

Milestone on Cheviot View



Milestone North of The Waggon



Milestone on West Road



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Darras Hall restaurant recommended in Michelin Guide

Darras Hall boasts the only Indian restaurant in the North East to be 'recommended' in the Michelin Guide to Great Britain and Ireland 2016.

The official endorsement by Michelin inspectors was given to Haveli based on its smart and fashionable setting, professional and personable staff and food with influences from across India. The recommendation also singled out Haveli's chef's signature curries as something to try.

Haveli's inclusion in the Michelin Guide comes just weeks after it was shortlisted by MP Guy Opperman for the Tiffin Cup, a competition created by a group of MPs to celebrate quality South Asian food in Britain and raise money for charity.

Owner Sunil Mehra said: "We all work incredibly hard to ensure Haveli offers the best Indian food possible and we use only the best quality and freshest ingredients available. I'm thankful to the Haveli team, our suppliers and of course our customers."

Based at Broadway, Haveli opened its doors in late 2013. The restaurant's name means 'traditional mansion house with historical and architectural significance'. See haveliponteland.com





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Inspiring women for 100 years - the WI

By Muriel Sobo

This is the centenary year for the countrywide Women's Institutes.

The first was founded in 1915 during the First World War in Wales, the format was imported from Canada, and they spread rapidly through the rural areas of the UK.

Ponteland Parish has been well served with a variety of Institutes. Ponteland WI was founded in 1920 with Mrs Tryphena Langton, the vicar's wife, as the first president and it is looking forward to celebrating its own centenary!

There was a Thornhill WI, sadly no longer, a Darras Hall WI started in 1966 and meeting in the afternoons, one at Kirkley which celebrated 50 years last year and the newest one, the Ponteland Village WI, was founded in 2013.

It is flourishing with a younger membership and inspiring members with a wealth of opportunity in various courses on craft, lifestyle and cookery.

There have been invitations to Buckingham Palace for the centenary Garden Party, many events including sparkling lunches, fashion shows, concerts and so much more to celebrate this special year.



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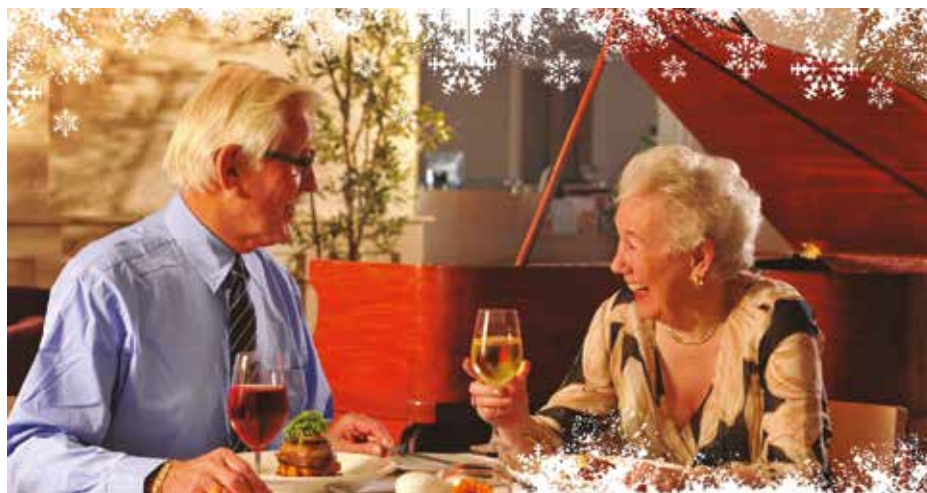
Here is a taster of what you can expect:

Christmas Eve

On arrival you will have time to settle into your room before a delicious lunch is served in the dining room followed by entertainment from an array of music and dance groups. Before you retire for the evening you can join in with some carol singing by the fire with a glass of mulled wine and later enjoy some festive films.

Christmas Day

Start the day with a delicious champagne breakfast served in the dining room or treat yourself to a relaxing breakfast in your room. Before lunch you can open presents that have been delivered by Father Christmas and chat with new friends over a glass of bucks fizz and mince pies. Lunch will be served from midday; a delicious three course meal with all of the festive trimmings. The afternoon is yours to enjoy, either with the Queen's Speech in the main lounge or you can welcome some of your family and friends to the home. Parlour games will take place in the evening with a



chocolates and Christmas cocktails

Boxing Day

Today is a day for relaxation, you can put your feet up and watch the world go by, take a stroll with us in a local park or treat yourself to a relaxing morning. A traditional Boxing Day menu will be served throughout the day.

Your break can be as little as three days over the Christmas holiday or you can extend your stay into the New Year. When staying at Eastbourne House you can relax

in the knowledge that all of your needs are being cared for, so that all you need to worry about is enjoying yourself.

For further information about Christmas Breaks at Eastbourne House, please call: 0191 252 7295

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