

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Core Strategy under fire from
Town Council and Civic Society

Karate kid Abbie
gets black belt first

Alpine gardener Alan
wins top award

New Xmas market hits the right note

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Produced by Cian creative pr



Successful Christmas market to return in 2016

A new family Christmas market held at Ponteland High School is set to return in 2016 after it was hailed a success by organisers.

The event on Saturday December 5th was a joint initiative by the high school and Ponteland Rotary Club and raised £1,000 for charity.

There were 40 stallholders selling items ranging from Christmas cards to artwork and jewellery. There were also food stalls, including Northumbrian Organic Meats and the Post Box, and the Blackbird pub offered visitors refreshments including beer, lager and mulled wine.

Musical entertainment was provided by the excellent Ponteland Community Wind Band.

Alan Hall, Immediate Past President - Rotary Club of Ponteland, said: "We were delighted with our very first Ponteland Rotary Christmas market. Owing to the generosity of the local population, we think we made around £1,000 for charity which we think is excellent for a brand new event.

"Our plan is to mount the event again next year. We are optimistic that it will be bigger and better in December 2016."



Help us beat the burglar



PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager

There have been 19 crimes reported for the Ponteland and outlying areas during November.

These break down to the following offences:

- One burglary to outbuilding, tools stolen (Kirkley Hall)
- One theft of charity box (Merton Way)
- One attempt theft of diesel (Kirkley)
- One theft of motor vehicle and associated car parts (Ryal)
- One taking of a motor vehicle, a courier van containing parcels (Eastern Way)
- Two thefts from motor vehicle, tools stolen (Darras Hall)
- One theft by employee (Matfen Hall)
- One damage to door (Fairney Close)
- One assault (Ashbrooke Drive)
- Four shoplifting (two at Sainsbury's, one at Waitrose, one at One Stop)

- One communications offence (Prestwick)
- Two harassment offences (Darras Hall)
- One racial public order offence (Main Street)
- One possession of cannabis (Ponteland High School).

The pupil was dealt with by Youth Triage for the cannabis possession report, while a man has been arrested and charged for both harassment offences and a man was issued with a caution for the assault.

Our targeting of suspected burglars is relentless, but we need the public to work with us to help us prevent burglaries taking place.

Steps residents can take to reduce risk include: making sure windows are secure and doors are locked; leaving a light or TV/radio on if you are going out; and making sure blinds and curtains are drawn while you are out. If you see anything suspicious please report it to us.

Community Speedwatch volunteers continue to be a visible roadside presence and in November they monitored over 450 vehicles and 26 motorists were sent warning letters for excess speed.

Following concerns raised by residents and parents, 11 further motorists were sent advisory letters for exceeding the 20mph limit on Thornhill Road during the course of the 'school run'.

Our next police surgery is being held on Saturday 9th January from 9.30am to 10.30am at Merton Hall, Ponteland, with CSO Paul Cotterill.

Contact the Ponteland Neighbourhood Team:

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101 ext-69569

Email
easttynedale.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk



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Parents take the petition and letters of protest to County Hall



Town Council claims views of residents have been “consistently ignored”

Big questions have been asked of Northumberland County Council plans to develop a 70-hectare green belt site for a new combined education and leisure campus and hundreds of new homes in an official consultation response by Ponteland Town Council.

The NCC plans for the site bordered by Callerton Lane, Mayfair Gardens, Fairney Edge, Cheviot View and Rotary Way are outlined in its revised Northumberland Local Plan Pre Submission Core Strategy for the period 2011 to 2031 and the accompanying Ponteland Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

They include an increase in allocation of new housing of 40 per cent to 900 homes (including 126 which have already been built) with 400 on the site of the relocated middle and high school, leisure centre and fire station, 310 on the former police headquarters site and 180 on a new area of land allocated between Callerton Lane and Willow Way.

The documents were the subject of a six week public consultation exercise during October and November which included an event at the Memorial Hall which attracted more than 700 attendees.

Government guidance states that for a core strategy to be considered ‘sound’

at independent examination it must be: positively prepared; justified; effective; and consistent with national policy.

The Town Council has challenged the pre-submission draft on all four criteria.

To be ‘positively prepared’, the core strategy ‘must be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements’. It also needs to be ‘consistent with achieving sustainable development’.

PTC claimed the proposals would place very heavy demands on Ponteland’s infrastructure and described NCC’s Infrastructure Delivery Plan as ‘a draft that lacks detail and leaves questions unanswered’. It claimed housing numbers proposed for Ponteland are ‘inconsistent’ as they have been changed over four consultations from 850 to 640 to ‘an indicative 900’, and that 900 dwellings would ‘harm the character of Ponteland’.

To be ‘justified’, the core strategy must be ‘founded on a robust and credible evidence base’ and ‘most appropriate when considered against reasonable alternatives’.

PTC challenged NCC’s assertion that building 24,000 new homes across the county would create 10,000 new jobs, saying there was very little detail on how this would be achieved and describing it as ‘wishful thinking’. It claimed the Government’s own figures (DCLG 2012) gave a housing need of just 12,000. PTC added that there had been no alternatives proposed, particularly in the relocation of schools, leisure centre and library and other leisure facilities - all of which the Town Council stated it had not been consulted on.

To be ‘effective’, the core strategy must ‘be able to be delivered’ and ‘have flexibility’.

PTC is critical of the proposal to build a large community campus on a green belt

site accessed off Dobbies' roundabout, questioning its economic viability and challenging the 'wisdom' of combining a first, middle and high school for four to 18-year-olds on one site. It also claimed the location would reduce walking to school and increase traffic. PTC's counter proposal is a rebuild of Ponteland middle and high schools within their current sites and refurbishment or rebuild of Darras Hall First School on its existing site, as well as retaining the library at its current location – possibly as part of a new build community facility. PTC also urges NCC to 'heed the wishes' of thousands of Ponteland residents who have stated in all four consultations that they do not want large-scale house building on the green belt.

To be 'consistent with national policy', the core strategy must accord with the national planning policy.

PTC said it would support national policy on prioritisation of brown field sites for development, such as the former Northumbria Police HQ and Meadowfield. It urged NCC to secure the Prestwick Pit site for employment use to encourage the use of Meadowfield for housing. PTC also claimed the projected 15% population increase for Ponteland was well in excess of national projections and would be unsustainable for the town's infrastructure. PTC said the green belt area did not need to be developed for the community campus if its counter proposals were followed.

Concluding, the Town Council's consultation response highlighted the Birney Hill public inquiry planning inspector's statement that housing need alone should not justify inappropriate development in the green belt.

PTC criticised the insertion of changes to the Core Strategy and SPD including the increased housing allocation and change of status of Ponteland from service centre to main town at a stage when the consultation was purely about soundness rather than actual content, adding: "There is a feeling that the views of Ponteland residents have been consistently ignored."

In a second consultation response - to the County Council's Supplementary Planning Document - the Town Council said: "The proposed housing within the plan period is not needed other than to fund the improvement of existing education and leisure facilities."

Finally, in a third consultation response - to the County Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan - PTC said it 'did not know of any resident' who wanted the library to

be moved and said there was 'no known support' for relocation of Darras Hall First School.

The IDP response also highlighted concerns about the reduction of - and new location of - playing pitches. PTC said the cricket club was concerned about relocation of the cricket pitches to an unsuitable location on a 'considerable slope' which posed health and safety risks due to proximity to homes on Cheviot View. A recently completed £500,000 all-weather pitch would be lost and the draining of rugby pitches 'at great expense' would have been wasted, it added.

The full Town Council response can be seen at ponteland-tc.gov.uk

NCC has also received negative feedback from Ponteland Civic Society, which in its formal response wrote: "Nowhere in the site vision statement (or any other section of the document) does it explain why it has been considered necessary to relocate the schools and leisure centre, or what other alternatives have been considered.

"The development plan is not a high quality or sustainable design in that it will remove essential community facilities further away from the town centre to the detriment of their accessibility, as well as the essential character of Ponteland.

"The great majority of the land surrounding Ponteland is actively farmed (rather than being turned into 'pony paddocks', for example) so that the landscape has a distinctly rural character. This character will be destroyed by the introduction of 'structural' landscaping."

County council pledges feedback on consultation

Coun Allan Hepple, cabinet member responsible for economic growth at Northumberland County Council, said: "The recent consultation on the core strategy, infrastructure delivery plan and South-East Ponteland supplementary planning document have now closed.

"We would like to thank the many residents and representatives of local businesses and organisation who attended the drop-in session and who have provided us with their views both there and in writing, including Ponteland Town Council.

"I want to reassure everyone that we are now looking very closely at all of the comments received and will be providing feedback and information about the next steps as soon as we can."

Church backs campaign against first school relocation

Parents of children at Darras Hall First School campaigning against plans to relocate it two miles away on the new proposed community campus say they have enjoyed significant community support.

In last month's Pont News we reported on the mass demo outside the school which organisers said 250 parents and children attended, and a highly critical letter to NCC from the school's chair of governors. The following week the campaigners handed in a box containing a 1,500-name petition and objection letters to County Hall on the final day of the Core Strategy consultation.

Now the campaigners, who have nearly 400 followers on a Facebook campaign page, have welcomed letters of support from a local church leader and the town's MP.

In a letter to NCC, the Reverend Joan Ross of the United Reformed Church on Broadway wrote: "The Ponteland Draft Core Strategy Plans claim to promote the best quality education for children of primary school age as well as those of middle and senior school years.

"However, nowhere in Northumberland County Council plans or statements do I read of any recognition of the educational curriculum's expectations that schools will actively relate and contribute to the people and organisations in their locality.

"Such omission of this key dynamic between school and local community only serves to expose financial expediency as a likely reason for the inclusion of Darras Hall First School in Ponteland Strategy Plans."

MP Guy Opperman wrote to parents Hilary and Kelvin Duffy to say he had received reassurances there would be further consultation on the SPD and urged the campaigners to "make sure the voice of local residents is heard loud and clear".

Mrs Duffy said: "The council is proposing massive changes to the educational structure in Ponteland without considering if it is what the schools and the parents want. We can tell them with certainty we don't want what they are proposing. We want to stay where we are."

The core strategy is scheduled to be submitted to the Government in March 2016 for examination, with adoption expected in autumn 2016. For more information visit: northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Planning-policy/Plan.aspx



Ponteland Community High School Report

Generous students hand over Christmas hampers for families in need

Generous students have handed over Christmas hampers to be distributed to families in need in the region.

Students from each tutor group provided food and presents for each hamper before decorating them in a festive theme.

The hampers were collected by Newcastle City Council social worker Beryl Ashworth for 'Action for Children', to be given to families in the Newcastle area including those living in hostels to escape domestic violence and young people who have been forced to leave home.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "I am so impressed with the generosity and thoughtfulness of the students and staff. This year has been just outstanding; a lot of work had gone in to these and it is brilliant that the students and staff are showing practical kindness towards people less fortunate than themselves."

Exam certificates ready for collection

Any sixth form students who sat exams last summer and have not yet received their AS/A2 and GCSE certificates can now collect them from main reception.

Students are required either to collect them in person or a friend or family member may collect them but only with some form of ID (passport, driving licence etc), and a signed letter from the candidate stating who they authorise to collect their certificates on their behalf.

Boccia team progress to the regional finals

A first for Ponteland High School saw two teams attending the Area Boccia Championships at Gateshead Leisure Centre on December 3rd.

Boccia is a Paralympic sport similar to bowls, requiring a great deal of skill, teamwork and concentration.

The two teams entered in the tournament had only a few sessions to practice, but on the day performed extremely well against well-established schools. Jake Cooper, Joseph Green, William Fretwell and Monika Prasad in Team 1 qualified for the semi-finals, finishing in 4th place, meaning they qualified for the regional finals in January.

Head of PE Allan Atkinson said: "This event was, for many of the students, the first time they had represented the school and all should be commended for their exemplary behaviour, sportsmanship and effort. For me this was one of the most rewarding and enjoyable days of sport I have experienced in 28 years of teaching."



Student rowers to represent county

Six students will be representing the county in the regional finals of the indoor rowing championships in March.

The Northumberland heats were held at Cambois Rowing Club on Friday December 4th, where highlights included Year 9 student Will Viney, who led from the start and held on for a six metre win at the end of a gruelling four minute row. The top 4 finishers all qualified.

Year 9 results: 1st Will Viney, 2nd Fraser Hutt, 4th Georgia Woods, 7th Max Forrest.

Year 10 results: 2nd Catherine Woods, 3rd Lucy Fraser.

Year 11 result: 4th Lewis Montero.

Karate kid Abbie gets her black belt

Darras Hall karate kid Abbie Smart has been awarded her black belt at the age of just nine in a first for her club.

The club, set up two years ago, has 50 students aged from five to ten years old who train at Darras Hall First School every Wednesday night and at Wylam Institute on Monday and Friday evenings.

Abbie, of Errington Road, is the first from the Darras Hall club to get her black belt after gradings held at Stamfordham, along with Isabella Spooner, aged eight, of Crawcrook, who trains at Wylam.

Jamie Clelland, a third dan Seiken Ryu karate instructor,

praised their achievement: "They're both performers, and they also do dancing lessons which is helping too. Dancing and karate go well together because you have to remember sequences in both, and it all came natural to Abbie and Isabella.

"You can tell they practise at home because they come back and have the routines nailed, even five days later. It has been really good to see them stick at it and achieve their black belts, and they deserve it for all their dedication."

Parents interested in the karate classes for their children can see the club website at seikenryu.com or contact instructor Jamie Clelland at jamie.clelland@btinternet.com

Black belt holders Isabella Spooner and Abbie Smart with instructor Jamie Clelland



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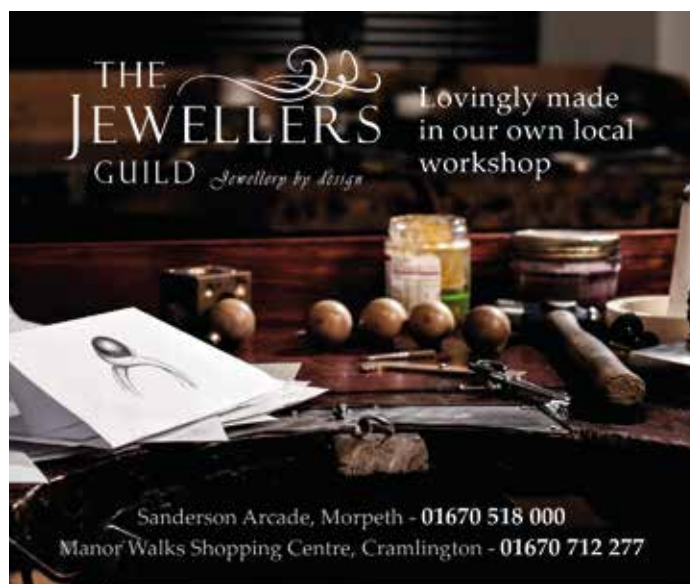
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The Editor
Pont News & Views



A call for supporters of the county council's regeneration plans to 'make themselves heard' in this month's letters...

Many are in favour of the county council's development plans

Whilst I can appreciate the very vocal opinions of those saying 'No' to all the proposed development in Ponteland, there is a significant number of people who want to say 'Yes'.

I have many friends who would like to see the development of a range of different sized accommodation - older people who would like to downsize, but stay in Ponteland, and young adults who lived all their childhood here, and would like to buy their first home close to their family.

Teachers complain that their schools are falling apart and the most cost effective solution is to build 'state of the art' facilities on the one site. That doesn't mean three year olds mingling with 18 year olds; it just means one site with three separate sections - very handy for parents currently having to pick up and drop off at different locations.

One site accommodating three to 18 year olds works in Dunston, why can't it work in Ponteland?

The leisure centre has been substandard for years, and new library facilities have long been mooted.

Do we need an industrial estate in a prime location, or would many occupants like more sensibly laid out accommodation next to a dual carriageway and opposite an airport?

It is about time that people and businesses who can see positives in proposed developments made themselves heard.

DP Rundle

Whinfell Rd
Darras Hall

Have you found my glasses?

I work at Carousel on Broadway, Darras Hall, and on Wednesday December 2nd at around 3pm I realised my glasses had been mislaid.

I am wondering if anyone has picked them up from the counter thinking they were their own. They are Tommy Hilfiger prescription dark blue framed glasses.

They might still be in the bottom of someone's shopping bag unnoticed. Please get in touch if you find them - I can be contacted at leona24anderson@gmail.com or on (01661) 821261.

Leona Anderson

Ryehaugh
Darras Hall

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February issue deadlines: Delivery of the February issue will start on Thursday January 28th and be completed by Tuesday February 2nd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Thursday January 14th. 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 February issue.

Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views but the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters for legal or other reasons. All letters submitted should include the writer's name and address.

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What's on...

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on Wednesday January 6th is Bernard Hope. His topic is 'Titanic: the Truth and Myth'. 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 February meeting will be on February 3rd.

Kirkley WI

Kirkley WI's next meeting is at Kirkley Hall on Wednesday January 6th at 7pm. Guests and new members are always welcome.

Plant Heritage North East Group

The AGM for Plant Heritage North East Group will be in the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Saturday January 9th, followed by a talk on 'The beautiful bearded irises of Cayeux' by John Tait of Ponteland. All are welcome.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday January 11th is Anthony Atkinson whose talk is entitled 'Thomas Bewick'. 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

Our first meeting in 2016 will be held on Monday January 11th. We are delighted to welcome local group member Mala Janes talking about 'Building a new garden in Ponteland'. Mala moved to the North in 2001 and to Ponteland in 2011. She has changed her garden from a lawn, leylandii hedges and conifers to a

woodland style garden with an alpine house on a gently north facing slope. Mala is a very keen alpine gardener and an exhibitor at the shows. 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.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

A slide presentation about the work of the Great Air Ambulance Service is the topic at The Friends of Kirkley Hall talk at 2pm on Wednesday January 13th in the main building at Kirkley Hall, near Ponteland. The cost to non-members is £5 and a place can be booked by ringing Brenda Parke on (01661) 853489.

Ponteland Business Network

Ponteland Business Network's next business breakfast meeting will be at the usual venue, the Diamond Inn, from 7.45am to 9.45am on 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

Ponteland Community Partnership

Come to a meeting and share your ideas, concerns and expectations for improving the quality of life in our community. All are welcome. Our next meeting is at Ponteland Town Council offices at 7pm on January 20th. More information from pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or Hon Secretary Shirley Hill at shirleyahill@o2.co.uk

Ponteland Local History Society

Our next meeting is on Thursday January 21st at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland, when speaker Mike Greatbatch's subject will be 'Wherryman and chain horse lads: transport on the Ouseburn'.

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

Monday January 25th - design and planning for Capability Brown Festival 2016. Meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road on the fourth Monday of each month from 2pm to 4pm. Visitor charge £4. Contact ponteland.eg@btinternet.com or (01661) 881395.

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 at alanhalleef@msn.com or on (01661) 860284.

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.

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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The Council approved a grant of £1,500 to Dalton Village Hall for assistance towards their running costs and costs of recent electrical inspection work.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed the recommendation from the Working Party, which had met on November 16th, for adult fitness equipment in the park. The Environment Agency supported the proposal and it was agreed to include an item in Pont News, on the website and on notice boards to gauge opinion on the idea. Consultation would also be carried out with the Friends of Ponteland Park and a nearby resident. The Council also approved a recommendation to move and purchase some litter bins in various locations, to be funded via the existing budget and contingencies.

PONTELAND LIBRARY

The Council discussed the current situation regarding the county council's proposal to move the library to the leisure centre. It was reported that there were lines of enquiry running with the county council and other organisations in relation to this issue and further discussions would take place in the new year.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Coun Dodd reported that a decision had been made by the NCC Executive to move County Hall from Morpeth to Ashington. He had raised the matter of polling stations at NCC, querying the suitability of some of the premises used in Ponteland during the last elections, and hoped there would be an opportunity for the Town Council to discuss this further with NCC officers.

MAYOR'S DIARY

The Mayor reported on events he had attended in November, including a briefing at County Hall on protection for the elderly, particular in relation to nuisance calls, and documentation was available in the Town Council office. It was suggested that it may be worthwhile running a joint campaign with NCC in Ponteland next year on this important subject, possibly as part of the Party in the Park event. The Mayor also reported on his attendance at a meeting about the proposed North East Combined Authority (NECA). He had attended a further meeting on this subject on December 9th and he agreed to forward the information provided to councillors.

ROTARY CLUB CHRISTMAS MARKET – DECEMBER 5th

The Mayor and other councillors had attended the event at Ponteland High School and reported numbers in attendance were good for a first time event that took place in very poor weather conditions. Attendees agreed that the event was well organised with a good variety of stalls and entertainment and this positive feedback will be forwarded to the Rotary Club.

REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL

REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Coun Butcher reported on her attendance at the Newcastle International Airport Consultative Committee on December 1st, and was delighted to report that the airport had been voted Best Airport for the third year running.

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

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Alpine gardener Alan receives prestigious award

By Mala Janes, Chairman, North East England Group - Alpine Garden Society

Ponteland butcher Alan Newton has become the first Englishman to be presented with the Golden Jubilee Salver by the Scottish Rock Garden Club.

The Salver has been awarded annually for the past 18 years for outstanding service to the club, but has never before crossed the border.

Alan has worked tirelessly in promoting alpine gardening to the public, having started organising the national shows in this area in 1994.

He organises the Ponteland Alpine Show every year with unstinting energy; this show is arguably the best autumn alpine plant show in the world – it will be back in the Memorial Hall in Autumn 2016 for everyone to enjoy.

He received the award at the club's AGM in Scone, Perthshire.





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Ponteland Community Trust: what's it all about?

By Muriel Sobo

What is this Community Trust and who is on it?

The first AGM was held at the end of November and there were six of the eight directors and eight members of the public present.

The directors are: Peter Cowey who is chairman; Alan Hall; Peter Sutcliffe; Andy Anderson; David Butler; Brian Russell; Brian Prickett; and Lesley Noble.

Peter Cowey explained how the trust worked. Essentially, it is a vehicle for getting money from different sources to fund agreed projects within the community. Any appropriate project that has attracted cash can have that value used in the application for matched funding from Europe.

The directors, in the two years since its founding, have made contact with a firm of solicitors in Newcastle who specialise in EU funding work, as well as a firm of architects who have proven experience in designing and building of community hubs around the country.

Proposals have been sent to the Northumberland County Council spin-off Arch, which will evaluate them.

There are already about 20 such trusts in Northumberland. Morpeth has one – the Greater Morpeth Development Trust – and

its Town Council and NCC have invested a total of £7m in the town through it since 2006.

Ponteland get cracking! This could be the saving of the library on its present site and as part of a much bigger community hub with a range of facilities and uses. And what about an interesting and informative website for the community trust?

Appointment of Hall Secretary – Ponteland Memorial Hall

Due to the planned retirement of the current postholder in March, Ponteland Memorial Hall Committee is inviting applications for the post of Hall Secretary.

Duties include managing all hall bookings, invoicing, and providing administrative support for the operation of the hall. The contract is for seven hours per week linked to office opening hours. A job description and rates of pay and conditions can be obtained by emailing infopmh@yahoo.co.uk or by contacting 01661 822603 (answering service outside office hours). The closing date for applications is Friday January 15th.


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40 years of Guiding recognised at Westminster Abbey

By Muriel Sobo



Lucinda Porter has for more than 40 years looked after the 4th Ponteland Guides with enthusiasm and good humour.

Her first Guides could be grannies by now! Her title these days is simply 'Guider' but most of us of a certain age used to call our leaders 'Captain'!

The National Scout and Guide movement acknowledges this stalwart leadership and commitment by inviting those who have given 40 years or more working with Guides to a service in Westminster Abbey.

Lucinda and her friend Janet Walker took off for a few days including one day in London. In the Abbey is a plaque to give thanks for the lives of both Robert Baden-Powell and Lady

Baden-Powell, the first world leaders of the Scout and Guide movements, so the Abbey holds significance for both organisations.

It was the venue one Saturday last November, a very special day, even if it was a wet one, for Lucinda when she was invited to attend the National Scout and Guide Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving.

Born in Ponteland, Lucinda is a familiar presence as she manoeuvres her wheelchair for her early morning swim at the Leisure Centre, then off to her job with the HMRC three days a week, and then some shopping at Waitrose as well as running the Guides. Phew!

Scouts and Guides are always seeking volunteers to help with their meetings and activities. Have you the time and interest to take on this role?

Artists Aaron and Elizabeth win peace poster competition

The annual Peace Poster competition run by the Lions Club attracted a large entry from Year 7 and 8 pupils at Ponteland's two middle schools this year.

Aaron Finlay, 11, won the Richard Coates Middle School contest with his poster of flags around the world in striking colours.



Elizabeth Quigley, 12, came top of Ponteland Community Middle School with her portrayal of the Share Peace theme showing two children holding hands on top of the globe with a tree full of leaves of world flags.

The two school's art teachers, Emily Douglass and Vicki Harper, were present at two presentations at the school assemblies where prizes were presented to the top three from each school by Ponteland Lions President Nick Jackson.

The local winning posters have been entered into the NE district and national competitions. Pictures of all the entries are displayed in the schools.



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The true history behind Jameson Fields

By Muriel Sobo



A lot of confusion exists about the buildings on the northern fringe of Ponteland, the Police HQ and Care Village and now Jameson Fields.

The first buildings, out in the countryside, were the Cottage Homes opened in 1903 by the Poor Law Guardians of Newcastle. Children from the workhouse in Newcastle were sent into the country, into 'houses' each with a house matron, and escaped the exploitation and dreadful conditions existing in the city.

There were over 300 children at its peak but it closed in 1960. The Cottage Homes then became a teacher training college until the Northumbria Police made it their HQ. Now the police are moving out and the huge site is designated for housing.

The Care Village was a small development outside the Homes perimeter where about 40 adults with learning disabilities lived in three purpose built cottages looked after by carers or social workers.

It opened in 1984 after big fundraising campaigns locally. There were workshops, the residents tended gardens producing

flowers and vegetables for sale and in 2008 a beautiful landscaped garden was opened by Peter Beardsley.

All this area of Care Village is now Bellway's building site called Jameson Fields, named after the first captain of Ponteland Cricket Club James Jameson. The club was founded by Miss Holt in 1880 and played on the field to the rear of Eland Green Farm owned by R Stephenson. James was 12 years old and made captain. Miss Holt ran the St Mary's choir and the choir boys made up the first cricket team!



Unpaid carers offered support by Northumberland charity

Unpaid carers who look after relatives or friends with physical or mental illnesses, disabilities, frailty or substance misuse are being offered support by a Northumberland charity.

Carers Northumberland covers the whole county and can provide practical advice on money issues, benefits, access to breaks and social care support and has an information line available every weekday.

It also has a number of carer groups across the area where carers can meet with other carers, have a coffee and a chat or listen to a talk. The charity also offer trips out and events such as relaxation days or skills workshops.

Carers don't need to be living with the person they care for or related to them to obtain support, which also includes one-to-one advice either in person or via the telephone.

Registering gives access to the Carers Emergency Card Scheme, which offers peace of mind that the person being cared for will not be left alone if the carer is unable to be with them.

- To register or to find out more about Carers Northumberland, see the website at carersnorthumberland.org.uk or ring the information line on 01670 320025. The charity will also come and talk to local groups about its work and what it can offer.

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