

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



NCC's green belt plans go
back to the drawing board

Police appeal on suspect
vehicles after recent raids

Tragic GP's trust funds free
heart tests

Teen trio's beauty bid raises thousands for charity



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Photo of Lauren by Imogen Kate Photography.



Photo of Leah by Anthony Bradshaw.

Young beauty queens raise thousands for charity

Three Ponteland schoolgirls have raised thousands of pounds for charity as they competed in a national beauty pageant.

Juliette Taylor, Leah Middleton and Lauren Pattinson, all aged 14, were finalists in the Miss Galaxy UK contest and took to the catwalk at a glitzy event at the Park Hall Hotel, Lancashire.

The stunning trio – all students at Ponteland High School – said they had an “amazing” weekend, as Leah came third and Juliette fourth in the Junior Miss Galaxy UK competition. Juliette also collected four awards, winning the charity, publicity, congeniality and popularity categories.

Juliette had raised £2,156 for the Christie cancer charity, made the most public appearances, received the most Facebook likes for her photo and was voted by the other finalists as being the most friendly and helpful contender.

Juliette said: “I’ve had the most fantastic time and loved the whole build up, choosing dresses, attending events and raising lots of money for the Christie cancer charity and lots of other local charities.

“I’m looking forward to working towards Junior Miss Teen GB in October at Blackpool and raising money for children’s charity Together For Short Lives and representing Northumberland once again. I was so pleased Leah and I both placed side by side 3rd and 2nd runner up as we have both worked so hard and will both continue to do so.”

Lauren helped to raise more than £3,000 at the RVI’s Tiny Lives Xmas party at St James’ Park, giving out sleeping bags, hot drinks and food to the homeless in Newcastle with the Shining Stars group, and taking part in a charity evening at The Postbox for toddler Kian Musgrove, who needs urgent lifesaving cancer treatment in the US.

Leah has also been working hard over the past five months, fundraising and attending events for organisations, raising £2,600 for The Christie and helping raise £4,000 for other charities. She is also working towards the Junior Miss Teen GB contest this autumn.



Photo of Juliette by Anthony Bradshaw.



Please continue to report suspicious vehicles



PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager

There have been 33 crimes reported for the Ponteland and outlying area for January.

These break down to the following offences:

- One burglary to dwelling (Darras Hall)
- One theft of a motor vehicle (Middle Drive)
- Two theft from motor vehicle (Darras Hall/Whalton)
- Four thefts (three Ponteland/one Milbourn)
- Five damage to motor vehicles (Ponteland)
- Two damage to buildings (Main Street)
- Seven assaults (Ponteland)
- Six shoplifting (five Waitrose/one Co-op)

- One communication offence
- Three sexual offences
- One public order offence.

Recent thefts and burglaries in the area have been linked to suspect vehicles seen driving around the area, checking over work vehicles and checking for unoccupied premises.

When telephoning the police, be prepared to give an accurate description of what is happening to assist responding officers to know specifically what they are looking for and where to look for it.

Inform the call taker of your exact location, keep your mobile phone switched on, note the suspicious vehicle's registration plate, make, model, colour, and note the driver/passenger's physical description, clothing and any other identifying features.

Officers took part in the multi-force 'Operation Checkpoint' on February 4th, and 40 vehicles were stopped, there was one arrest for drink driving and six road traffic offences detected.

Community Speedwatch volunteers monitored more than 300 vehicles in January and 25 motorists have been sent warning letters for excess speed.

The next police surgery is being held on Saturday March 19th March from 9.30am to 10.30am at Merton Hall, Ponteland, with CSO Paul Cotterill.

Contact the Ponteland Neighbourhood Team:

Call 101 ext-69569

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



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Aircraft enthusiast in autogyro appeal

An aircraft enthusiast is appealing for information about an autogyro with a fascinating history whose last reported location was Ponteland in 1983.

The single seat rotorcraft in question – G-ATSW – was built by Ernest Brooks, proprietor of Brooklands Garage at Spennymoor in County Durham. He lived in Tudhoe Colliery, developed the prototype in the garden shed out the back, and flew his first gyrocopter in 1962.

Mr Brooks formed a company called Brooklands Aero to manufacture and sell both engines and airframes.

G-ATSW, which became the prototype for the Brooklands Mosquito, first flew in July 1966 powered by a 1200cc Volkswagen beetle engine he had converted which was later replaced in 1968 with a more powerful 1600cc unit.

Steve Bond, from Birmingham, who is trying to find out what happened to the pioneering aircraft, said: "The Mosquito could cruise at 80mph and was forecast by some aviation experts to become the motor car of the air – not least, perhaps, because it was powered by a converted Volkswagen engine."

Brooklands produced 11 Mosquitos, which were advertised for sale costing £1,150 – £300 cheaper than their competitors. The main structure was of alloy, with a fibreglass tank, tail and fuselage. They took off at 30mph in 65 yards and could climb at 750ft per minute.

Tragically in 1969, while demonstrating one of his autogyros to prospective buyers at Teesside Airport (then RAF Middleton St George), Mr Brooks was killed after the engine stalled at around 150 feet altitude and plummeted to the ground.

Just before the accident former helicopter pilot Brian Leusley had joined the firm, which was now reformed as Gyroflight Ltd and based in Ferryhill, County Durham.

The Mosquito was subsequently developed into the Hornet by former RAF pilot Cecil Golightly and Mr Leusley, who flew one of the tiny, open-cockpit machines across the English Channel in 1970, and it is believed another 16 machines were built.

But Mr Leusley was also killed in an



accident that year at an air display at Woodford Airfield in Cheshire when the Hornet lost control. This second fatal accident ended the project and the remaining machines, both those finished and partially completed, were put into storage in the Dean and Chapter district of Ferryhill.

Since then, many gyroplanes have been bought and sold but records on the CAA database appear patchy.

Mr Bond added: "As the prototype for the Mosquito, G-ATSW has a place alongside pioneers like Ernest Brooks, not only in British gyroplane history, but in that of aviation in the North East so I was rather surprised that she hadn't been preserved.

"Following withdrawal from use her last location was reported on 30th July 1983 and was given as Ponteland, Northumberland, where the aircraft's frame was reported to have been stored for a long time in a garden behind a garage.

"If she has somehow survived, I hope that somewhere like the North East Aircraft Museum at Sunderland would be interested in displaying a local product. Ernest Brooks achieved a great deal from a small garage in Spennymoor and showed that aviation isn't just about the big firms from down south."

- If anyone has any information on the G-ATSW, Steve Bond can be contacted at Steve.Bond@birmingham.gov.uk or on 0121 303 9396.



Tragic GP's trust funds free heart tests

Donations made in memory of a Ponteland GP who fell victim to young sudden cardiac death funded 100 free ECG screenings at a clinic held at the Methodist Church.

Heart charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) tested young people aged between 14 and 35 and three were referred for further investigations.

The event, the fifth held by CRY in Ponteland, was funded by the Mathew Thoppil Trust – set up in memory of the 31-year-old who died suddenly in 2005 of ischaemic heart disease while playing squash.

Family friend Simone Sansom, who helped organise the screening, said: "Through fundraising with Mathew's family we have achieved our goal of providing a cardiac screening programme for Ponteland, brought in to identify potentially-vulnerable young people.

"Mathew's parents Philip and Santhy felt very strongly that everything possible should be done to detect and warn potentially vulnerable young people. We are all very grateful for everyone who came to the screening and to Andy Anderson and Rev. Tim Thorpe for allowing the screening clinic to be held at the Methodist Church."

Every week, 12 apparently fit and healthy young people die in the UK from undiagnosed heart conditions.

An ECG (electrocardiogram) test is a simple way to identify the vast majority of abnormalities that can cause sudden deaths in young people. The test is quick, non-invasive and painless and if necessary a further echocardiogram (ultrasound scan of the heart) can be taken on the same day to provide further clarity or reassurance.

Chief Executive of CRY, Dr Steven Cox, said: "CRY is in its 20th year and we are so proud that our screening programme now tests around 23,000 young people annually. But we still believe screening needs to be extended to all young people.

"Although screening will not identify all those at risk, in Italy, where screening is mandatory for all young people engaged in organised sport, the incidence of young sudden cardiac death has been reduced by 90%."

Benn Hardcastle from Newcastle Thunder RLFC, who was screened alongside Academy player Hayden Williamson to raise awareness, added: "You naturally assume that because you feel fit and healthy that heart disease can't possibly affect you. How wrong can you be?"

"CRY is able to subsidise the screening programme so that each appointment only costs £35. I'd urge anyone in the target age group to take the screening test. It could save their life."

Pictured (l-r) are: Peter Lewis, Registered Clinical Physiologist and Screening Event Manager, Simone Sansom and Benn Hardcastle from Newcastle Thunder.



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Major delay to Core Strategy as planning chiefs go back to drawing board

Planning chiefs have been forced to go back to the drawing board after major issues and areas of concern were raised with a blueprint for future development in Northumberland.

The nine month delay to the submission of the Core Strategy to the Government could put the county council in danger of formal intervention over future strategic planning policy, as local authorities have to complete their local development plans by early 2017.

A report to the council's Cabinet on March 21st says "a number of issues and areas of concern with the Pre Submission Core Strategy document have arisen" meaning officers needed to "undertake further work to address areas of risk and make policy changes".

It said "major modifications" will need to be made to the strategy "to resolve outstanding objections in order to submit a more robust plan for examination", meaning a further

six week consultation on a revised document starting in June.

Key issues raised in the six week public consultation held last autumn included fundamental challenges from residents and developers alike to the assumptions behind the figures used for new housing allocations and job creation.

In Ponteland there was "significant objection from local communities" about green belt deletion to rebuild schools and leisure facilities and from developers whose sites are not proposed to be released from the green belt. Details of the education and leisure proposals for Ponteland also needed to be finalised, the report said.

A revised core strategy will go to cabinet in May and following the public consultation in June-July will go to full council in November for approval, with submission to the Government in December and adoption in summer 2017.

Hexham MP Guy Opperman said: "Despite so many promises, NCC has now admitted they will not complete their Local Plan by the Government's

deadline, almost five years since the process started. The failure to produce any kind of credible plan is unacceptable. This abject failure by NCC to get a Local Plan in place and protect our green belt leaves communities on a knife edge."

Tony Noble, Chair of Ponteland Green Belt Group, said: "The current proposal is not fit for purpose and NCC acknowledge that major modifications are needed. NCC have ignored the informed views of local residents to pursue their own aspirational, unrealistic housing numbers."

Coun Allan Hepple, cabinet member for economic growth at NCC, said: "We have listened carefully to the views of residents, and as a result we are changing parts of the plan. We know that it is important to finalise the policies in the core strategy as soon as is possible – but they must also be robust and the right ones for Northumberland. We will be working with local communities, including parish and town councils and neighbourhood planning groups, before finalising proposed changes to parts of the plan."



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Rep presents Wind in the Willows

Ponteland Repertory Society presents Wind in the Willows by Alan Bennett at the Memorial Hall this week.

Performances run at 7pm from Wednesday March 2nd to Saturday March 5th with a Saturday matinee at 2pm. Tickets costing £8 adult/£6 child are available online at pontelandrep.co.uk



Toad (Leo Emmerson) is frightened by the animals of the Wild Wood (aka our Youth Theatre) during rehearsals



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Complaints about selfish motorists in this month's letters...

Selfish and speeding drivers spoiling life for Dunsgreen residents



The part of Callerton Lane from the Diamond Inn to the bottom of Middle Drive is a 30mph limit.

I have asked for some signs to show this as, by the excessive speeds I see on this road, the speed limit indicated by the spacing of the street light lampposts is ignored. The speeding is worse before it gets light and after dark.

Another problem for those of us living on or near Callerton

Lane is the cars dropping off and especially collecting school students. For we as residents of Dunsgreen getting in or out of the cul-de-sac is very difficult. The grass verges have been reduced to mud. See the photograph here taken on January 23rd.

Efforts have been made on both counts and I especially praise our volunteer speed gun group but it seems nothing can be done. A free-for-all attitude and selfish behaviour are spoiling life for those of us living here.

Anthony Ridley

Dunsgreen, Ponteland

Poor parkers should be named and shamed

Why do some drivers just assume that no one actually uses the footpath and simply consider it an extension of the road for their use?

The attached photo shows the latest poor effort at parking. There's no choice but to walk in the road, which is annoying but manageable for adults, but how about kids, people with pushchairs, or even wheelchair users?

We should name and shame these ignorant road users.

Steve Eglon

Western Way, Darras Hall



April issue deadlines: Delivery of the April issue will start on Thursday March 31st and be completed by Tuesday April 5th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday March 17th. 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 April 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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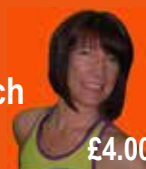
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What's on...

Ponteland Wildlife Group

Graham Holyoak, a project manager working for the Tyne Rivers Trust, will talk to the Ponteland Wildlife Group about the work being done to re-introduce water voles in the Kielder area. Come and learn about this on Tuesday March 1st at St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm. Admission £2 includes supper.

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on Wednesday March 2nd is Peter Weighill. His topic is 'The Mighty Mississippi'. We meet in St Mary's Church Hall at 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Visitors are welcome. No charge. Interested in our activities? Come to a monthly meeting, visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring the membership secretary on (01661) 822225. Our April meeting will be on April 6th.

Ponteland Repertory Society presents 'Wind in the Willows' by Alan Bennett

Wednesday March 2nd to Saturday March 5th at 7pm (Saturday matinee at 2pm) at the Memorial Hall. Tickets costing £8 adults/£6 child can be booked online at pontelandrep.co.uk

Kirkley WI

The ladies of Kirkley WI look forward to welcoming the Reverend Christine Brown as guest speaker to their meeting on Wednesday March 2nd at 7pm. Christine is going to tell us about her experiences with the Hospice movement, locally and overseas. Visitors welcome.

Women's World Day of Prayer

Women's World Day of Prayer will be holding their annual service on Friday March 4th at 2.30pm in the URC on Broadway, Darras Hall. This year the ladies of Cuba have compiled the service and everyone is warmly welcomed to attend. There will be a delicious afternoon tea to follow.

Ponteland High School Fashion Show and Charity Dinner

Ponteland High School's Fashion Show and Charity Dinner is being held at The Biscuit Factory on Friday March 4th in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust in the North-East. For tickets call (01661) 864426.

Ponteland WI

Our next meeting is at 7pm on Tuesday March 8th in the lounge of the Memorial Hall. The speaker is Brian Burnie on 'War Baby to Daft as a Brush'. Visitors are welcome. A date to note in April is the 9th when we are holding a coffee morning again in the Memorial Hall. More details later.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday March 8th we are celebrating International Women's Day with an evening called 'Grandmothers and Granddaughters'. We meet on the second Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. For more information email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or see our Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

The next meeting of Callerton Garden & Flower Club will be on Wednesday March 9th at 2pm in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland. The speaker is Jean Gibbon (AD) of Consett on 'Chinese Capers'. Visitors £5 welcome

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 March 11th. 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

Plant Heritage

North East Group

Plant Heritage North East Group will be in the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Saturday March 12th for a talk on orchids by Dr Philip Warren. All are welcome.

Memory Café

Monday March 14th 10.30am to 12noon at Ponteland URC, Broadway, Darras Hall. Anyone who lives with memory problems or dementia is welcome, together with family members or friends. Each month there are activities to stimulate memory and recognition, and a short focus on practical help. Tea, coffee and snacks are available in a relaxed setting, where you will also find a listening ear and resources to help. Future dates: monthly on second Mondays: April 11th, May 9th, June 13th, July 11th.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday March 14th is Steve Cox whose talk is entitled 'Air Traffic Control'. 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 March 14th we are delighted to welcome our guest speaker Dave Riley whose talk 'Bits and Pieces' will cover Cyclamen, Saxifragas and Dwarf Conifers. Dave has written articles on Dwarf Conifers and Dwarf Pines. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland at 7.30pm. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 4132574. The Northumberland Spring Show on Saturday April 2nd at the Wentworth Leisure Centre, Hexham, NE46 3PN. Open to the public from 11am to 4pm. Plants sales from 10am. Entry £3 (AGS/SRGC members free).

Ponteland Embroiderers Guild

Please note our next meeting is not on the usual day. Tuesday March 15th at 2pm at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road. Further planning and stitching for the Capability Brown Festival to be held at Wallington Hall. Bring along your ideas and work in progress. Join us for a meeting as a visitor, cost £4. Contact ponteland.eg@btinternet.com or (01661) 881395.

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 Wednesday March 16th. More information from pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or Hon Secretary Shirley Hill at shirleyahill@o2.co.uk

Friends of Kirkley Hall

Friends of Kirkley Hall would welcome members of the public to our talk on Wednesday March 16th at 7pm which sees Mike Pratt, Chief Executive of Northumberland Wildlife Trust, reflect on wildlife, landscape and conservation past and future. Places at these talks, which take place at Kirkley Hall, can be booked by ringing Brenda Park on (01661) 853489 at a cost of £5 for non-members.

Ponteland Civic Society

The AGM will be held on Monday March 21st at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall and is followed by our speaker John Johnson's talk entitled 'The Gateshead Millennium Bridge from Concept to Construction'. Each meeting followed by tea and biscuits and chat. Visitors are most welcome, for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

The Bridge @ Ponteland

Methodist Church

The Bridge is a different kind of church service. Everyone is welcome to join us for our up-beat, relaxed and family friendly services. We meet at 4pm most Sundays in the church hall. Dates in March: 6th, 13th and 20th (Easter family service). For more info email thebridge.ponteland@gmail.com or call (01661) 872982 or find us on Facebook.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Ponteland Beer Festival 2016

Choose from over 150 beers, lagers and ciders, a wine bar and soft drinks, and food supplied by Longhorns Barbecue Smokehouse, with live music throughout the weekend. Friday April 22nd from 6pm to 11pm and Saturday April 23rd from 12noon to 11pm at Ponteland Leisure Centre rugby pitch. Tickets can be purchased in advance at pontelandbeerfestival.co.uk or at Ponteland Leisure Centre for £10, saving £2.50 on the gate prices. See advert on p9.

North East Music Festival

The Grand Opening by High Sheriff of Northumberland Mrs Lucy Carroll at the Gosforth Park Suite, Newcastle Racecourse, on Friday April 22nd with drinks reception at 7.15pm. Featuring Anna Reay and her band. Tickets costing £20 from JG Windows on (0191) 2321356 or online via Eventbrite. The Grand Finale follows at 7.30pm on Saturday April 23rd at St Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle, with Trelawnyd Male Voice Choir and Dishforth Military Wives Choir. Tickets from £12 from Blackwells Bookshop on (0191) or 2326421 or online via Eventbrite. Both concerts in aid of the Great North Air Ambulance and other regional charities.



GRANT APPLICATIONS

Ponteland United Football Club

The Town Council considered a grant application from the Football Club which listed a number of items they needed to acquire. The Council agreed a grant to provide three respect barriers at a cost of £414 plus VAT.

PONTELAND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN VISION STATEMENT

The Council discussed various suggestions for the Vision Statement in respect of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan and agreed the following:

"Ponteland will maintain its identity as a sustainable, thriving community, accessible to people of all ages. A gateway to Northumberland, which values its rural setting, rich heritage, natural environment and open spaces. It will remain visually distinct and separate from the Newcastle/Tyneside conurbation, meeting the needs of the local population, without compromising this distinction. The special identities of Darras Hall, the historic core of Ponteland village and the small settlements in the Parish will be maintained and enhanced for future generations, making the Parish of Ponteland a desirable place to live, work and visit."

FLOOD RESILIENCE PLAN

Following on from the production of the plan by the Town Council, it was agreed to distribute a flood advice leaflet for householders to each property in the civil parish area with the next issue of Pont News. A further meeting of Councillors will be held in the near future to discuss the plan with the relevant agencies

including the Environment Agency, Northumberland County Council and the police and fire services.

PONTELAND LIBRARY

There are various lines of inquiry running with the County Council regarding the proposed relocation of Ponteland library to the Leisure Centre. The Town Council had written to NCC and the County Councillors were also holding meetings with officers at NCC in an attempt to create some form of community hub on the current site. A group of residents had also held a meeting with NCC officers. Councillor Dodd said NCC had agreed to examine the case for a community hub type building on the current site with their preferred developer.

QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

The Council was updated on progress to date in respect of the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations. Letters had been sent from the Town Council to all businesses, organisations and schools in the area and direct contact would be made over the next few weeks.

ROTARY DUCK RACE

The Town Council granted permission for Ponteland Rotary Club to use the Park on September 4th for their Annual Duck Race and agreed to the provision of portable toilets as a grant contribution.

PROPOSED REMOVAL OF PARKING RESTRICTION ON MEADOWFIELD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

The County Council is carrying out a consultation exercise on the removal of

double yellow lines in a lay-by between Meadowfield Court and the turning head next to Lawsons Fuses to enable the area to be used as additional car parking space. The Town Council is in favour of the proposals and is to ask NCC if it was possible to make this a 'herringbone' style parking area.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Council approved recommendations from the Working Party, which met on January 18th, regarding memorial seats on Coates Green: the creation of a seats register; approval of charges for memorial seats - £575 for installation and a further £200 if seats were to be placed on paving. The Council also agreed to provide a commemorative seat on Coates Green to mark the Queen's 90th birthday and approved a further request for a memorial seat on the Green.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported it had been agreed that an independent audit of the costs involved for the proposed move of County Hall from Morpeth to Ashington would be carried out.

MAYOR'S DIARY

The Mayor reported on events he had attended in January and February. The Mayor and several Councillors had attended a moving memorial service for Mrs Sally Allan on February 7th.

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

Flood advice leaflet produced by Town Council

A leaflet offering advice for homeowners and businesses in the event of a flood has been produced by the Town Council.

Copies have been distributed to domestic and commercial properties across the parish with this month's issue of Pont News and can also be downloaded from the website at ponteland-tc.gov.uk

The leaflet includes important emergency contact numbers, details of local flood wardens and how to receive advance warning of forecast floods.

If you have not received a copy and would like one, please contact the Town Council at enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk or call (01661) 825092.



BLACKSHAW'S TO OPEN MITSUBISHI DEALERSHIP IN MORPETH



INTELLIGENT MOTION

ADVERTISING FEATURE

A family-owned motor dealership based in Alnwick is about to open a new branch in Morpeth. Blackshaws of Alnwick is a long established business which has been operating in the north Northumberland market town for almost 100 years. Founded in 1919, the company has thrived over recent years following relocation in 2004 to the outskirts of Alnwick into new state-of-the-art premises and a flagship showroom.



DEALER PRINCIPAL WILLIAM BLACKSHAW
EXCITED ABOUT EXPANSION INTO MORPETH

sales environment for our customers. Our number one priority is to offer excellent customer service."

The new Blackshaws Mitsubishi site is located in the busy industrial and retail area close to the station in the south east of the town. The dealership will incorporate a new car showroom, service reception and parts counter, offices plus a service and repair workshop at the back. Forecourts to the front and sides will display a wide selection of used vehicles.

Summing up the feelings of the whole team at Blackshaws William said: "We've had our eye on a development in Morpeth for some time as it is such a vibrant town and a growing community. However we wanted to make sure the time was right and that we had a really good site. I'm delighted to say that we've now managed to secure excellent premises and a great franchise partner in Mitsubishi. We can't wait for our official opening on March 7th."



A VISUAL OF THE NEW BLACKSHAW'S MITSUBISHI
DEALERSHIP ON COOPIES WAY, MORPETH

Employing 40 staff and now under the leadership of fourth generation Dealer Principal, William Blackshaw, the company is expanding even further in March with the opening of a new Mitsubishi dealership on Coopies Way in Morpeth.

Speaking of the new development, William commented: "We're extremely excited at the prospect of having a new branch in Morpeth to showcase the superb Mitsubishi range. Over recent years the Mitsubishi product portfolio has gone from strength to strength with vehicles to suit all budgets

and needs from 7 seat family SUVs to stylish crossovers and the more familiar commercial 4x4s. We believe the range is ideally suited to the area, particularly the ultra-economical Outlander PHEV, and once we are established we hope to develop really strong ties with the local community as we have done in Alnwick.

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**BLACKSHAW'S IS HOSTING A LAUNCH
EVENT WEEKEND ON SATURDAY 12TH
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Visit www.blackshaws.net

Blackshaws

in the family since 1919

Operatic eulogy for popular ex Rotary president

By Muriel Sobo

Have you ever been to a thanksgiving service for a much loved father, friend or relative where the eulogy began with a passionate singing of the Afro-American spiritual 'Deep River'?



That was the start of a half hour romp through Les Danby's life by Graeme, his hugely talented son that had us laughing but not quite crying.

Our Methodist church was filled to the gunnels with the many relatives of both Les and Marion, members of Rotary, the Golf Club, Methodists and Ponteland people who wanted to join together to celebrate the life of Les.

Les was born in Consett in 1933, the son of a pitman and one of seven siblings. By the time Les was called up for National Service in 1951 he had already met Marion, a local girl, at a dance, and of course kept in touch, writing a letter every day.

He drove around Shropshire delivering supplies to RAF bases. Consett Iron Works gave Les his first job as an estimator and Marion worked in the offices.

They married at Leadgate Methodist Church in 1956 and lived in rented accommodation till they were able to buy a house near Burnopfield to accommodate their growing family, Graeme born 1962 and Karen in 1964.

Les was climbing the roofing tree using his estimator skills and was taken on by a contractor working in Newcastle, one Bill Tilley and from there he developed his own business. The family moved to Ponteland and bought a house in Chester Close in 1976, followed by one in Collingwood Crescent and then finally in Ridgely Drive. Les retired in 1997 and died on December 27th.

Graeme said that his dad struggled with foreign cuisine. I can endorse that. In the early 1980s, newly arrived from the tropics where a curry lunch on a Sunday was a fairly standard invitation, we invited a number of friends from church to join

us. We ended up finding a ham sandwich for Les!

Les and Marion were golfers, playing on holidays and winning the married league locally. The annual Rotary concerts with Graeme and his opera friends were introduced in 1984 and were hugely popular. Les was a Past President of Rotary, enjoyed a game of bowls and snooker, was a painter in the U3A art class and sang in the church choir, when we had one.

It is sad to see an active member of our community diminished by progressive dementia. Marion handled it all with care and concern but the last four years have not been easy and we hope she continues as matriarch to Graeme and Val, and to Karen, Tom and their super kids, Kristian and Sophie!



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Churches together in Ponteland

The Ponteland churches wish you a peaceful and joyous Easter

United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall

Palm Sunday, March 20, 10am
Good Friday, March 25, 10am
Easter Sunday, March 27, 10am

St. Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

Palm Sunday, March 20
Holy Communion, 8am
All Age Worship, 10am

Mon March 21 to Sat March 26 Compline, 7pm
Compline is the late night service of the monasteries.
Half an hour of peace and quiet.

Maundy Thursday Choral Communion March 24, 7pm
Then a Vigil until Compline, 9pm
Good Friday Morning Service, March 25, 10.30am
Easter Sunday Holy Communion, March 27, 8am
Festal Communion, 10am
Compline, 6.30pm

Methodist Church, Ponteland

Maundy Thursday Upper Room Communion,
March 24, 7.30pm
Good Friday Service, March 25, 10am
Easter Sunday, March 27
Sunrise Service at Bolam Lake, 6am
Communion Service, 10am
Evening Service, 6.30pm

Methodist Church, Milbourne

Good Friday, March 25, 7pm
Easter Sunday Communion, March 27, 6.30pm

St Matthew's R.C. Ponteland

Holy Thursday Mass, March 24, 7pm
Good Friday Passion, March 25, 3pm
Holy Saturday Easter Vigil, March 26, 5pm
Easter Sunday Mass, March 27, 10.30am

Holy Saviour, Milbourne

Palm Sunday Holy Communion, March 20, 11.15am
Easter Sunday Holy Communion, March 27, 11.15am

St Francis Xavier, Cheeseburn

Palm Sunday Holy Mass, March 20, 8.30am
Good Friday Easter Vigil, March 25, 3pm
Easter Sunday Holy Mass, March 27, 8.30am

Coates Green, Ponteland

Good Friday, 11.15am
Raising of the Cross.
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Saltwick student highlights plight of Saharawis

A Saltwick student is to highlight the plight of the Saharawis in a documentary screening and talk later this month.

Joanna Allan, a PhD candidate at the University of Leeds, first became involved with the Western Sahara Campaign after visiting the Saharawi refugee camps in Algeria in 2006 with a group of Spaniards who do a fundraising marathon there every year.

She was inspired by seeing how the Saharawi refugees had built a functioning state-in-exile, with schools, hospitals and amongst the highest literacy rates in Africa, out of nothing and with very few resources.

Knowing that the case of the Saharawis was one of the longest running humanitarian disasters in recent history, yet also one of the most unknown in the UK, she became a volunteer with the Western Sahara Campaign.

Joanna has since returned twice to visit the Saharawi refugee camps in 2008 and December 2015 and during her first trip in 2006 also visited the part of Western Sahara known as 'the liberated territories', which are scattered with millions of landmines.

The former Ponteland High School pupil said: "Most people think that colonialism in Africa is over. But in Western Sahara, the end of Spanish rule in 1975 gave way to a new occupation,

this time by Morocco. As they invaded, the Moroccan air force napalmed the fleeing Saharawis.

"Four decades later, around 150,000 Saharawis continue to live in huge refugee camps in the harshest corner of the Algerian desert. In October 2015, these camps faced the worst floods in their history, leaving many families without shelter. The world continues to look the other way as the Saharawi people face arrests, torture and disappearances for demanding their independence."

The talk is being held at Morpeth Town Hall from 6pm to 8pm on Tuesday March 22nd.



Joanna is pictured (middle) with two Venezuelan researchers in Tifariti during her 2006 visit.



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Private nursery to open at Sure Start centre

A private nursery is to open next month at a children's centre threatened with closure last year.

Angry parents launched a vociferous campaign after Northumberland County Council announced plans to close the Sure Start centre in Thornhill Road, Ponteland.

The centre, open Mondays to Thursdays, provides a range of services for hundreds of families with children aged under five including drop-in sessions and other activities for children and carers, as well as advice on health, childcare and early learning.

It also has close links with health visitors, midwives, nursery nurses, childminders, schools, day nurseries, speech and language therapists and others, and attracts families from as far afield as Belsay, Matten and Stannington.

Based on the site of Ponteland First School, it is one of five the authority had earmarked for closure as part of a bid to make £44m in savings over two years due to Government austerity cuts. Proposals included providing services at alternative community venues.

Last March the council announced a 12 month reprieve while officers explored ways of providing children's services on a more commercial basis.

Now NCC has struck a deal with Tynedale-based Little Tinklers, which will open an Ofsted registered nursery at the centre offering sessional, full day and funded places to eligible two, three and four year olds on April 1. The business, which

already operates a nursery in Corbridge and holiday club in Hexham, will accommodate children from birth to five years.

NCC said a weekly Stay & Play and Baby Club session will continue in partnership with health services, while early year's practitioners will provide speech, language and play development information. Family support will be delivered in homes and parenting and child development courses will be delivered from other west locality Sure Start Children's Centres. Work with Albemarle barracks will also continue.

Coun Robert Arkless, Cabinet member for Children's Services, said: "This is great news for families in and around the Ponteland area. We're delighted a well-established nursery will be providing these new services."

Parents campaigning against closure last year. Photo by the Hexham Courant.



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Ladies and girls get into golf at Ponteland

By Ladies Captain Margaret Sutherland

The Ladies' Section at Ponteland Golf Club is holding an Open Day Taster Golf on Sunday April 10th from 10am to encourage ladies and girls to take up golf.

A free golf session with the professionals will be available on the day, where your swing technique and putting will be practiced. Availability for these lessons will be limited and early registration is advisable.

Your visit will conclude with a tour of the club house and an informal chat over coffee and biscuits with lady members.

Follow up beginners' golf coaching will be available with the professional – five starter lessons for £25 over five weeks from Wednesday April 13th until Sunday May 15th (times to be advised). Golf equipment will be supplied. A further five improver lessons for £25 with the professional will be available from May 22nd.

A 'special' three month membership giving you full use of the clubhouse facilities is available, which is deducted from your annual fee should you decide to join.

Contact our professionals on (01661) 822689 ext-2.

* The Get into Golf initiative is being promoted nationally by England Golf.



Club professionals Alan Robson-Crosby (right) and Richard Robson-Crosby



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Ponteland Community High School Report

Elliot to represent the UK at European Youth Parliament

By Rebecca Curry



Year 13 student Elliot Barker has been selected to represent the UK at the next international session of the European Youth Parliament.

Elliot, along with seven other UK delegates, will head to Belfast on March 5th for four

days before spending another five days in Dublin. Nearly 300 young Europeans aged between 16 and 20 from 34 countries will meet to tackle recent European issues, with this year's theme being 'Crossing Borders, Transcending Conflict'.

Elliot will be on the committee for Economic and Monetary Affairs, writing and debating about topics such as what the future of the Economic and Monetary Union should be in the aftermath of the Greek debt crisis. Resolutions made on ideas for how best

European countries can cooperate across borders and how conflicts can be resolved will then be sent to decision makers across Europe.

EYP has enabled many Ponteland High School students to make the most of numerous opportunities, including foreign trips to locations such as Rotterdam, Prague and Nice. It has allowed our students to improve their public speaking and debating skills as well as supporting their university applications, and has also provided them with other important life skills such as developing their communications and team working skills.

PHS is the most successful state school in the history of the organisation; on five of the last seven regional sessions a team from the school has progressed to the national session. The chair of EYP UK and the North East regional session organiser are both ex-Ponteland High School students.

Elliot, who has previously participated in the UK and Estonian national sessions, plans to stay involved with the EYP as an organiser in future years, helping to provide opportunities for others to follow in his footsteps.

George receives prestigious award from Education Secretary

Award-winning student George Hunter has received the Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize for academic success, voluntary work and raising mental health awareness.

An outstanding teenager who used his online blog to raise awareness about mental health issues, George received the prestigious award from Education Secretary Nicky Morgan at a ceremony held at King's College, London.

George, a straight A and A* student and St John's Ambulance volunteer, was the fourth winner of the annual prize open to high-achieving youngsters in years 11 and 12 across the North-East of England who have made positive civic contributions, often in their spare time.

Among George's recent achievements was his 'My Tie Diary' blog that was set up to encourage discussion about mental health and raise awareness on the subject.

He had also found the time to run a series of Mandarin

classes for Year 9 pupils following on from his win in a national Mandarin speaking competition.

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan said: "George's outstanding academic achievements and willingness to serve his wider community in various ways made him an incredibly deserving winner."

George added: "I am passionate for young people to be supported and educated at school on mental health and wellbeing, and I want to use this prize to promote this. When young people are properly supported, they cope better, learn better, and become more resilient."

George has been offered a two-day work experience programme at the Department for Education's central London offices following on from his win.

Georgia set to make a splash in the States

Year 13 student Georgia Darwent has secured her dream university place.



She has been accepted to complete a four year Swimming Scholarship with the University of Florida in Gainesville, USA, and leaves for Florida at the beginning of August. The university is ranked 14th in the best public universities in America (2015).

Georgia will compete for the University of Florida Swimming Team in competitions such as the NCAA Championships. The team are currently ranked 4th in the NCAA rankings.

Delighted Georgia said: "My main aim/goal is to train well and study in Florida and hopefully earn my degree - and maybe masters - in Psychology."

The England swimmer returned from the Commonwealth Youth Games in Samoa last September with four medals. She 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.

She hopes to compete for the UK at the Commonwealth Games in Australia in 2018.

Have your say on housing in Ponteland

People living across the Ponteland parish who have not yet completed the housing needs survey issued with the February issue of Pont News are being urged to do so over the next fortnight.

Nearly 950 survey responses have been filed online or posted back so far – more than 20 per cent of homes.

The survey is the latest stage of the neighbourhood planning process, a new statutory regime enacted in The Localism Act 2011 designed to give communities the ability to become actively involved with the future development of their local area.

Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, a team of resident volunteers working on behalf of the Town Council, organised the survey to identify local housing priorities.

The questionnaire can be completed online at pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk but if you do not have internet access, or prefer to complete a hard copy and do not have one, contact Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Group c/o Ponteland Town Council on (01661) 825092. The closing date for replies is Monday March 14th.

Alma Dunigan, Chair of Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Group, said: "I'd like to thank all those residents who have already returned the housing need survey. We need a really good response as the analysis will become the foundation evidence to show what is really needed in the parish for the future, the type of housing and when it is required."

The survey analysis will be completed in early April and followed by a fresh community consultation outlining the results. The next stage will be the writing of a draft plan with policies to be the subject of a six week formal consultation. After review it will go to the County Council and after further examination, if approved, it will go to a local referendum.

Approval at this stage would mean it became part of the statutory development plan for the area, and all planning decisions in Ponteland would have to be determined in accordance with the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan.



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Lambing Weekend
Saturday 19th & Sunday 20th March, 10am-4pm
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Violinist who lost father and grandfather to cancer to perform in charity concert

A world renowned violinist who lost her father and grandfather to cancer and whose mother is also battling the disease is performing at a concert in Ponteland to raise funds for Cancer Research.

Kate Chruscicka left her native Poland aged 16 to study music in the UK, achieving a Masters in Solo Violin Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

She first met Bruce Grant from the Pont Charity Group while busking in Northumberland Street, Newcastle. With Ponteland Town Council seeking ideas for events to mark the Queen's 90th birthday and Kate wanting to arrange charity concerts, the idea for the Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration concert came about.

Kate will be joined by saxophonist Andrew Taylor and the Northern Singers at Ponteland URC, Broadway, Darras Hall, on Friday April 8th at 7.30pm, with an introduction by the High Sheriff of Northumberland Lucy Carroll. See her website at: kateviolin.co.uk

Tickets costing £12 to include a champagne toast are on sale at Geoff Steven Opticians, Main Street, Ponteland.



**THE QUEEN'S
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PATRON – THE QUEEN
Introduction – Mrs Lucy Carroll
High Sheriff of Northumberland 2015/16
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Hair show raises money for Kian Musgrove

A charity hair show raised over £900 for brave little Kian Musgrove who needs urgent cancer treatment that is only available in the USA.

Doctors found 27 tumours in the Newbiggin Hall toddler's body and so far nearly £280,000 has been raised towards the £500,000+ needed for the pioneering treatment for his neuroblastoma in New York.

Kian has faced months of chemotherapy, numerous operations and immunotherapy treatment in his short life, which initially showed the cancer was no longer detectable. But recently mum Kat learned the cancer had returned and she believes the relapse treatment is his best hope of beating the disease.

Emma and Angela Bailey, directors at Ponteland's Q Hair Design, wanted to help raise money for Kian's treatment and decided an evening of hair styling tips and demonstrations might be fun way to do it.

Emma said: "We've been following Kian's story for a while now and wanted to do something to help get him the treatment he needs. The tickets starting selling fast as soon as we started to advertise it.

"And on top of a sold-out event, we received many generous additional donations and raffle prizes from individuals and local businesses, so we were really overwhelmed."

The event was held at Post Box café bar on Main Street, where guests enjoyed prosecco, canapés and expert hair styling demos from the creative team at Q Hair Design.



Emma and Angela Bailey and the team at Q Hair Design and Alex Kinsey from Post Box Ponteland. Pic by Paula Rosa Photography.

Alex Kinsey, one of the owners of Post Box, helped to organise the event and added: "Emma's idea to do a hair show to raise money was a brilliant idea and we were only too pleased to offer Post Box as the venue. It was a great evening with a lovely atmosphere and a fantastic amount raised for Kian."

Among the prizes won on the evening was a luxury BMW for the weekend, courtesy of Coopers of Durham, dinner at Fratelli Restaurant and spa treatments from Behind the Scenes Ponteland.

If you'd like to make a donation to Kian's campaign, visit: kapipal.com/caringforkian

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FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT EVENTS

Fairtrade Fortnight continues with three more events this month under the theme The Big Fairtrade Breakfast.

Merton Hall's Fairtrade coffee morning will be on Friday March 4th from 9.30am to 11am with a Fairtrade stall. St Matthew's Big Fairtrade Brew is on Saturday March 12th in St Matthew's Church Hall, Ponteland, from 10am to 12noon with a Fairtrade stall, raffle, tombola/bottle stall, bric-a-brac stall and cake stall.

The United Reformed Church on Broadway, Darras Hall, will also be having a Fairtrade stall after Sunday worship on March 20th. All are invited to all these events.



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BUS CHANGE FOR PONTELAND CHARITY GROUP'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

The pick-up and drop-off point for the buses to next month's North East Music Festival has been changed from the Memorial Hall to Thornhill Road car park.

The festival, being organised by Ponteland High School Charity Group, will be opened by the High Sheriff of Northumberland Mrs Lucy Carroll at the Gosforth Park Suite on Friday April 22nd, with a drinks reception at 7.15pm.

Anna Reay and her band will be performing and Dr Caroline Pryer, Deputy Lieutenant of Northumberland, will conduct the closing ceremony. Tickets costing £20 are available from JG Windows on (0191) 2321356 or online via Eventbrite.

The Grand Finale follows at 7.30pm on Saturday April 23rd at St Nicholas Cathedral, Newcastle, with Trelawnyd Male Voice Choir and Dishforth Military Wives Choir. Tickets from £12 from Blackwells Bookshop on (0191) 2326421 or online via Eventbrite. Both concerts are in aid of the Great North Air Ambulance and other regional charities.

The two city venues have been chosen ahead of local venues to maximise the potential audiences and sums raised. The buses will run each night costing £3 return and tickets are also available from secretary Bruce Grant at grant.darras@gmail.com or (01661) 823606.



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Exam Invigilators

We are seeking to recruit new Exam Invigilators to work with the existing team in the organising and running of public examinations at Ponteland High School.

We are looking for reliable and confident people to join the invigilation team. Successful applicants will be able to work alone or as part of a team, have a good eye for detail and be able to remain calm under pressure.

As the main exam season is from mid-May until the end of June successful applicants must be available to work during this period. Full training will be provided and the role may also include scribing or reading for students who have qualified for access arrangements because of special educational needs and disabilities.

Training will be provided.

Interested? We would love to hear from you. Please visit www.ponthigh.org.uk 'About' menu – then 'Vacancies' page on our website for more details.

The appointment is subject to an enhanced DBS clearance.

Ponteland High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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The secret is that food & drink is our passion and we love sharing that with our customers. We grind our own spices, make our own yoghurt and hand prepare all of our dishes to order. Only the finest meats from local butchers & seafood from local ports are used in our food. It's no wonder that Haveli has become not just a local favourite but also the critics' choice who have made Ponteland the home of great Indian food for the North of England.

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Plan a gathering, party or event at Haveli and use our 14 seat private dining room where you & your guests will receive personal attention from their own dedicated waiting staff. The main dining room is also available for larger events

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Let us come to you. Our outside catering menu makes it easy to choose & deliver great Indian food at your event. Haveli is the perfect choice to cater for corporate events, parties and weddings

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Experience restaurant quality food in the comfort of your own home. **Now with free local delivery** for orders over £20

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