

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Gym expansion goes ahead despite burglary setback

Kirkley countryside festival promises day of family fun

Police crackdown on unruly youths and nuisance bikers

Middle School planning legal action over closure threat



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Gym expansion to go ahead despite burglary

A gym owner is pressing ahead with expansion plans despite a £10,000 raid by burglars.

Thieves stole electrical equipment, a till and safe containing £2,000 in cash and power tools from James Milburn Training on Merton Road, Ponteland.

They struck sometime between 8.30pm on Tuesday April 5th and 4.45am on Wednesday April 6th, smashing the padlock off the gym's door before heading upstairs to raid the office and physiotherapists' room.

Among the items stolen were an iPad, an iMac computer, a security system unit, music system and £800 worth of protein supplements.

Owner James Milburn believes the thieves had been tipped off that the security alarm and CCTV system had been disabled, as the main power supply had been shut down due to an unresolved debt from another tenant in the building.

The gym had been running on an emergency power supply during opening hours for a few days while legal paperwork was being checked by the utility company to prove the unpaid bill was not Mr Milburn's responsibility.

The burglary happened during the refurbishment of the ground floor, which is being turned into a new gym due to open in late April called No 1. The upstairs gym, opened in 2013, will continue to offer personal and group training

Mr Milburn, an award-winning nutritionist, sports coach, lecturer and former UK athlete, said: "It has been a terrible week. Due to the security system being disabled I have been advised any insurance claim would probably be void so we are just having to take the hit for the damage and stolen goods.

"But clients have been fantastic in their support – one has given us a stereo, another loaned us a laptop and sorted a new router. We plan to open the new gym downstairs within the next two weeks and hope the police catch whoever is responsible."

Northumbria Police said a 28-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of burglary and a 31-year-old woman arrested on suspicion of handing stolen goods and both released on bail pending further enquiries. Anyone with information is asked to contact police by calling 101, quoting reference 109 06/04/16.



James Milburn points to the missing safe in his office. Photo: Trevor Walker



Poor parking, uncontrolled dogs and unruly youths

PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager



There have been 32 crimes reported for the Ponteland and surrounding area in March.

These break down to the following offences:

- One robbery
- One burglary to dwelling
- One burglary to garage
- One theft of motor vehicle
- Three thefts
- Two damage to dwelling
- One damage other than dwelling
- One damage to fence/play park
- Two damage to motor vehicle
- One damage to sign
- One shoplifting
- Three make off without payment
- Seven assaults
- Three harassment offences
- Two child cruelty offences
- Two possession of cannabis.

Poor parking

There have been recent concerns raised regarding inconsiderate parking on

Thornhill Road, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Broadway and Middle Drive. Please ensure when parking that you use designated areas. Do not obstruct pavements, driveways or park on the carriageway so as to cause a hazard to other road users. Council enforcement officers are routinely seen in the area and police will also enforce vehicles causing obstruction. Many motorists are using the grassed verge areas on Callerton Lane (school run/leisure centre) and on unpaved roads in Darras Hall (workmen). Continued misuse will cause irreparable damage to park verges and kerbed areas.

Out of control dogs

Owners have a responsibility to ensure their dog is under control in a public place. There have been incidents recently of dogs/owners being attacked on the bridleway at Callerton Lane and in Ponteland Park. Lambing season is well underway and dogs found to be worrying livestock can be lawfully shot by a farmer or landowner.

Anti-social behaviour

There have been further reports of youth

anti-social behaviour and damage in the Callerton Lane play park. Police are patrolling the area and any youths involved risk police action. Reports of nuisance motorcycles continue in the rural area. Five riders have been issued with car seize warnings for riding off road and any further activity could lead to their bikes being seized and crushed.

Community Speedwatch volunteers monitored more than 850 vehicles in the area in March, resulting in 46 warning letters to motorists and one driver receiving a home visit about excessive speed.

Local police surgeries will take place on the following dates:

- Saturday 7th May 10am to 11am - Waitrose, Ponteland, with PC Lee Davison
- Saturday 7th May 1130am to 1230pm - Belsay shop, with PC Lee Davison

Contact the Ponteland Neighbourhood Team:

Tel: 101 ext-69569

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



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Head warns county council: I'll see you in court

The headteacher and governing body of a closure threatened school are planning to take Northumberland County Council to court if it presses ahead with a controversial education restructure in Ponteland.

Leaders at Ponteland Community Middle School are taking legal advice about a potential judicial review as hundreds of parents campaign against the proposed closure of the Ofsted outstanding rated school.

Meanwhile first school headteachers have taken legal advice following what has been described by one chair of governors in a letter to parents as 'personal and at times offensive attacks made on them' via social media.

Last month PCMS headteacher Dr Caroline Pryer said she was stunned to find out that all six first schools in the Ponteland Partnership - Belsay, Whalton, Heddon on the Wall, Darras Hall, Ponteland and Stamfordham - had asked NCC to launch a public consultation on scrapping the three tier system in favour of a two tier primary and secondary model. They were supported by Ponteland Community High School.

The restructure would mean adding years 5 and 6 to the six first school rolls to create 3-11 primary schools and years seven and eight to the high school to create an 11-18 secondary school, with PCMS closing and Richard Coates Middle School becoming a 3-11 primary school.

The proposed changes would be phased in between 2017 and 2019, when Ponteland Middle School would close and Ponteland First School would relocate to a new building on a shared site with Ponteland High School.

In a letter to parents on April 11th Darras Hall First School's chair of governors Dr Andy Large said there was no mention of any school closures at a meeting of the first school headteachers with NCC's director of education Andy Johnson on February 23rd, when a discussion about a multi academy trust turned to consulting on a two tier restructure.

The proposal to close PCMS as part of the restructure was presented in a report by Mr Johnson at a subsequent meeting at Matfen Hall on March 7th of all nine headteachers, he said.

The speed at which NCC moved to

launch a formal consultation process following the joint first school request - within three weeks - has led to accusations the authority is keen to see the restructure go ahead, a claim the council has rejected - saying it has no policy on whether schools operate a two or three-tier system.

MP Guy Opperman has accused NCC of "trying to impose its own plans on Ponteland". He said: "We cannot see why there is such an unseemly rush for this unprecedented upheaval. There is a real danger the county council is now setting one school against another."

He warned: "It is now vital the county council listens to the people of Ponteland. If local people are opposed to these plans it would be a real mistake for the county council to go ahead."

Opposition has also come from the governing body of the federation of Longhorsley and Whalton C of E First Schools. In a letter to parents, chair of governors Paul Truscott said the governors had voted unanimously against the proposed restructure, writing: "...there are strong reservations that the move is not in the best interest of Whalton C of E First School".

Gateshead headteacher slams consultation as a 'circus'

The consultation process has also been slammed by Paul Naughton, headteacher of the Ofsted outstanding rated Sacred Heart Primary in Byermoor, Gateshead, in a letter of support to campaigners. He said: "Outstanding headteachers and governing bodies discuss key issues at length with parents and stakeholders before making change."

Comparing this approach to the Ponteland consultation, he added: "I use the term circus; this is not only embarrassing for Ponteland schools but a total insult to your parents and extended local community. This beggars belief. If any headteacher posts come up in Ponteland schools soon, who would apply? If I were looking to place a child in a school in Ponteland now, I would have to think twice. Good luck."

Council will take all views into account before deciding

Coun Robert Arckless, cabinet member for children's services at Northumberland County Council said: "The council remains neutral about the three-tier or two tier debate in Ponteland. The details of the consultation, which has been generated by the schools themselves, will include a qualitative analysis of the views expressed and the numbers and types of response. It will be presented in a report which is scheduled to be considered by council committees towards the end of May.

"Before making any decision councillors will be looking very closely at the analysis and all of the feedback that is received. They will take the views of everyone into account. Their focus will be on what is best for all the children and families rather than any particular interest group. Headteachers, teachers, governing bodies, parents, children and others will provide us with their views on how any changes might have an impact on outcomes for children. All alternative options will be considered and welcomed as part of the consultation.

"Representatives from each school in the Partnership will be present at the consultation events for parents, staff, members of the community and any other interested parties to talk to about the proposal and implications. Individual schools are also running their own consultation events. It is very important that a fair and balanced picture is presented by all involved.

"We are following the same open and transparent consultation process in Ponteland as we have in all cases across Northumberland. This process started in October last year with building proposals, has continued with schools talking about becoming part of a multi-academy trust for the last few months, and more recently schools asking for the current consultation.

"As a local authority we continue to encourage all interested parties to have their say, and welcome all feedback, including other proposed models from other schools."



Parents at an open governors meeting at Ponteland Community Middle School on April 12th. Cover shot by Trevor Walker.

Huge support for parent campaign

Parents from both Ponteland Middle School and Heddon First School fighting against the restructure plans have set up three Facebook campaign pages with more than 1,500 'likes' and a change.org online petition to save PCMS has 2,500 supporters.

More than 250 parents attended an initial meeting at PCMS on March 21st where the decision to form a campaign group was made. Since then an information leaflet has been posted to 4,500 households across the Ponteland parish, a newsletter has been produced, and banners have been put on display.

Fundraising activity for a potential legal challenge includes three curry nights at Ponteland Tandoori, while campaigners were planning to man stands at the NCC consultation events on April 23rd at Ponteland High School and on April 28th at Ponteland Memorial Hall.

PCMS also planned to deliver a large batch of consultation questionnaires to County Hall with two bus loads of pupils.

Dr Pryer said there had been significant support for the campaign: "We have received many emails, cards, letters, flowers, cakes, biscuits, chocolate and financial donations."

But despite the potential rejection of the planned restructure by parents, Dr Pryer did not believe NCC would listen. She said: "I think they will try to continue to change to two tier and we shall challenge them legally."

"The judicial review is something we are talking about and gathering evidence.

We are talking with legal representatives and researching the costs involved. We would have to do major fundraising but we have nothing to lose."

Hermiona Ely, a mum of three school-age children in the Ponteland system and Parents of Ponteland Schools (POPS) campaigner, added: "We have a tried and tested school system that we know works

well and already have a group of schools that outshine most in the county. Yet we are being asked to gamble on unknown territory with no evidence or guarantee that it will be better.

"Why not simply keep the status quo and demand that NCC works harder for us in supporting their excellent schools? Why change anything?"

THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF TWO TIER

"There are sound educational reasons to change, including reducing the number of transition points from school to school, ensuring continuity of the curriculum and continuity of assessment, keeping accountability for progress across the primary phase clearly in one school and ensuring that we attract the best teachers into our partnership of schools by offering the opportunity to teach across the full primary phase in one school. The benefits of a primary/secondary model have been recognised already in many parts of the country that have moved from a 3 tier to a 2 tier system. It is interesting to note that in no part of the country are there proposals to move from a 2 tier to a 3 tier structure."

Lynn Blain, Headteacher, Ponteland First School

"As a high school we are accountable for the outcomes at the end of year 11 following five years of secondary aged schooling however we only have control over three years of that teaching as years 7 and 8 take place within middle schools. One of the key benefits of 11-18 provision is that you have control over the full five years ensuring that students are taught by subject specialists, with expertise and experience of GCSE and A level; you can plan curriculum continuity across the full secondary phase; ensure that assessment systems are aligned, as well as being able to quality assure the whole period of schooling."

Kieran McGrane, Headteacher, Ponteland Community High School

How to take part in the consultation

The consultation is open until midnight on May 11th. A response form can be completed online at:

northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Consultations.aspx

Ponteland Community Middle School

The headteacher of Ponteland Community Middle School Dr Caroline Pryer wishes to clarify that her statement which appears in this issue of Pont News about plans to legally challenge Northumberland County Council referred to notional plans by the parent-led campaign groups and not the school governing body. We are happy to make this clear.

Get the Party in the Park date in your diary

Families are being invited to mark the date of one of Ponteland's biggest annual events – the Party in the Park – in their diary.

The 14th party at Ponteland Park, which last year attracted an estimated 3,000 people, takes place on Sunday June 12th from 1.30pm. Admission costs £1 (children under five free).

Entertainment will include a fun fair, pony rides, target paint ball, a climbing wall, Spitfire simulator, archery, and the Richard Coates Middle School orchestra and choir.

The event is as usual organised by the Christian Churches together in Ponteland - St. Mary's, St. Mathews Catholic Church, Ponteland Methodist Church and United Reformed Church - to create a social gathering for the families and children of Ponteland and to support local charities.

Families pack Ponteland Park at last year's event.



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



A model for leading edge leisure and education facilities is put forward in this month's letters...

Consett's new leisure centre shows how it should be done

In the interests of a balanced discussion regarding any proposed development of the leisure centre and schools on Callerton Lane, can I suggest that residents visit the new development of leisure centre and educational facilities on the perimeter of Consett's town centre?

Perhaps this is what our local children's future facilities should look like? Not only has Consett's centre been revitalised but I understand the modern, new development is generally appreciated by their residents.

Furthermore the leisure centre is always full and well supported because it is leading edge. Consett, like other local centres, is not being left behind in the 21st century.

Peter Sutcliffe

Middle Drive, Darras Hall

Great concert - shame about the turnout

With some friends I went to the Queen's 90th Birthday Concert at the United Reformed Church on Broadway on Friday April 8th.

I'd like to thank the organisers for such a wonderful evening of varied music, superbly played and very reasonable priced, compared with other venues in the North East.

However, the attendance was rather disappointing. It is good to have local events of such high calibre, but organisers will only continue to arrange these if they are supported. It seems amazing to me that out of a population the size of Ponteland, fewer than 100 were in the audience.

Come on fellow residents. Support local events. Remember the old saying...if you don't use it, you lose it!

Christine Tweedie

Cecil Court, Ponteland

Gentleman who lost watch outside Barclays bank sought

I work in the Barclays branch in Ponteland and a few weeks ago we had a gentleman who came in after he had fallen outside a couple of days previously and lost a gold watch, and was looking to see if anyone had handed one in.

Since then we've had a customer who has handed in a gold watch that was found on the grass outside the bank and I am unable to trace the gentleman who originally lost the watch.

I just wondered if anyone had been in touch with yourselves as the gentleman was quite upset when he found he had lost this. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Steven Liddle

Barclays Bank, Ponteland branch

June issue deadlines: Delivery of the June issue will start on Tuesday May 24th and be completed by Saturday May 28th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Tuesday May 10th. 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 June 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 May 4th is Keith Bartlam and his subject 'Tales of an airline pilot'. We meet in St Mary's Church Hall at 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Visitors are welcome. See u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring (01661) 822225.

Kirkley WI

The ladies of Kirkley WI look forward to guest speaker Maureen Kesteven attending their monthly meeting on Wednesday 4th May at Kirkley Hall at 7pm, to talk about the National Garden Scheme. Visitors welcome.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker at 2.30pm on Monday May 9th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, is Prof Joh Derry and this is also our AGM.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Monday May 9th - An Audience with John Richards. John will talk about his life and his work with Alpines. There will be opportunities for members and guest to ask questions. There will be a free buffet after the meeting. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 4132574.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday May 10th at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall it is our annual meeting and annual baking competition. Contact pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

The next meeting of Callerton Garden & Flower Club will be on Wednesday May 11th at 2pm at the Memorial Hall, Ponteland. The demonstrator is Audrey Foster (AD) of Whitby 'Around Every Corner'. Visitors £5, all most welcome.

Ponteland Business Network

Ponteland Business Network's next business breakfast meeting is at the Diamond Inn from 7.45am to 9.45am on Friday May 13th. 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. Contact: Brian Russell at pbn@profitabilitygroup.co.uk

Stepping into Spring

Join us for a cuppa & a chat, find out more about staying active, involved and well, local activities and volunteering opportunities that

are happening near you. Saturday May 14th 10am – 12noon at St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The Ponteland Hopper is available to take you to and from the event free of charge. For more information or to book a seat on the bus telephone 0770 699 6897.

Plant Heritage North East Group

Our next meeting will be at 2.30pm on Saturday May 14th in the Memorial Hall where speaker Alistair Chalmers from the National Trust for Scotland will tell us about the Gardens at Branklyn and their four National Plant Collections.

Ponteland Tennis Club

'The Great British Tennis Weekend' is on May 14th/15th at Ponteland Tennis Club. The link to book your place is: clubspark.lta.org.uk/OpenDays/SearchResults?location=ponteland

Ponteland Community Partnership

Come to a meeting and share your ideas, concerns and expectations for improving the quality of life in our community. All welcome. Our AGM is at Ponteland Town Council offices at 7pm on Wednesday May 18th. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirleyahill@o2.co.uk

Queen's 90th Birthday Service

A service is being held at St Mary's Church at 3pm on Sunday May 22nd to mark the Queen's 90th birthday with refreshments afterwards at St. Mary's church hall. All welcome.

Ponteland Embroiderers Guild

Monday May 23rd - Melita Butterall, Durham, 'Durham Cathedral Embroidery Collection'. Meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road on the 4th Monday of each month from 2pm to 4pm. Contact: ponteland.eg@btinternet.com or (01661) 881395.

The Bridge @ Ponteland Methodist Church

The Bridge is a different way of doing church. We are relaxed, friendly and relevant to life today. Everyone is welcome whether you are a Christian or just wondering. We meet at 4pm in the church hall on most Sundays. Dates in May: 1st; 8th (all age service); 22nd; 29th. Sunday school/kids activities available. For more info call Tim or Kay on (01661) 822057, email thebridge.ponteland@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.

Ponteland Bowling Club

On each of the four Saturdays in May and the first Saturday in June Ponteland Bowling Club in Darras Road, Ponteland, next to the Memorial Hall, will be hosting free 'Bowls for Fun' mornings. Sessions are from 10.30am until 12noon. Why not come along and give bowling a try, everyone welcome and no age limit? The club currently has membership vacancies for females and males of all ages and no joining fee. See: www.pontelandbowls.com

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.



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORS

The Town Council meeting was preceded by the Annual Town Meeting attended by nine residents and town and county councillors. The Mayor presented his annual report for 2015-16 and he also presented the Meritorious Service award along with a gift and flowers to Val and Peter Riley for their work assisting at Merton Hall as volunteers.

SCHOOLS CONSULTATION

Councillors were asked for their initial views on the proposals for a two tier system of education in Ponteland. It was agreed that the Council would agree a response to the consultation following attendance at the NCC consultation events on April 23rd and 28th. The consultation ends on May 11th.

QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

A report updating Councillors on the celebrations for the Queen's 90th birthday was presented, with a list of the various events at which the Council would be represented. Councillors were pleased with the response from organisations and businesses who had agreed to be involved in the celebrations. They also agreed to send a letter of congratulation to the Queen on behalf of Ponteland. A press release was to be issued to the local media and a message from Prince Charles that had been circulated

to Councillors would be published on the website and Facebook pages.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

A recommendation from the Highways Working Party, which had met on March 11th, to instal a new lighting column on the footpath between Kirkley Drive and Meadowfield Industrial Estate and another at the Close just off Darras Hall for reasons of pedestrian safety was agreed. New street signage for Western Way to Edgehill (five signs) and from North Road to Main Street (eight signs) was also approved.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on 18 March 2016. The Council agreed to obtain costs for covering the large planter at Merton Way with artificial grass or recycled green rubber to be in place for the Northumbria in Bloom judging in July.

PONTELAND LIBRARY

Coun Dodd said it appeared the current site of the library was being earmarked for housing Development, but he was still hopeful that a library and community hub including offices would also be located on the site. It was very likely that the library would move temporarily from its current site to the leisure centre in the near future.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Coun Dodd said county councillors were keeping a watching brief on the schools consultation. A recent planning committee had approved the plans for the new County Hall to be located at Ashington. Coun Dodd said he would use some of his special allowance to carry out some works at the car park at the back of Merton Way. He urged councillors to attend the NCC Central Area Committee on Thursday May 12th at the Memorial Hall at 6pm to discuss matters of concern with NCC officers. Coun Jackson reported on changes to the planning system, including a reduction in the number of central planning committees from three to two with delegation of decisions now at 96%. Any objections to applications would be considered by a small working group with the officer in charge of planning and the committee chair and vice chair. They would consider objections and decide whether they were serious enough to warrant taking the application to committee. The planning enforcement system in Ponteland was being strengthened, with four additional area based officers to include a named officer for the Ponteland area.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on April 13th.



FREE EVENT

Ageing Well in Ponteland Stepping into Spring



Join us for a cuppa & a chat, find out more about staying active, involved and well, local activities and volunteering opportunities that are happening near you.

Saturday 14 May 2016
10.00am – 12.00pm
St Mary's Church Hall
Thornhill Road, Ponteland

The **Ponteland Hopper** is available to take you to and from the event **free** of charge. For more information or to book a seat on the bus telephone **0770 699 6897**.

PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

RECEPTIONIST/CLERICAL ASSISTANT

Salary: Spinal Column Point 14 - £16,231 (pro rata – 15 hours per week)

Part time 15 hours Monday to Friday between hours of 9.30am to 12.30pm

PRIDE IN PONTELAND

Ponteland Town Council is a Quality Council serving some 12,000 residents who want to make everyone feel "Pride in Ponteland". The Council is seeking to appoint a Receptionist/ Clerical Assistant to support the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and the Council. We are seeking someone who has experience of dealing with the public and can provide an excellent 'front of house' service.

At least three years of relevant administration and reception experience together with excellent IT skills and the ability to work as part of a small team are essential.

For an application form, send a SAE to Ponteland Town Council, Unit 1 Meadowfield Court, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Ponteland, NE20 9SD or ring (01661) 825092. A copy can also be downloaded from the website ponteland-tc.gov.uk

Closing date: Noon Friday 20 May 2016

Kirkley Hall opens grounds for countryside festival

Kirkley Hall is offering a day of family fun as its grounds are opened for its annual countryside festival.

More than 4,500 people attended last year's event and on Sunday May 15th visitors will be entertained by Morris dancing, horse riding displays, a fun dog show, tree climbing, floristry displays, fairground rides, and a cattle and sheep display.

Other attractions include the Zoological Gardens and a variety of stalls selling local crafts, plants and food including a hog roast and BBQ, while teaching staff will offer careers advice and answer any questions on courses Northumberland College offers at Kirkley Hall.

Entry costs £4 per person and parking will be in a field with a £1 charge per car.

Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens houses over 300 species of animals including new world monkey species such as the critically endangered cotton-top tamarin and endangered Goeldi's monkey. See kirkleyhallzoo.co.uk



A dog performs at last year's festival. Photo by Trevor Walker.

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BARNARDOS PONTELAND CELEBRATES 25 YEARS OF FUNDRAISING

The Barnardos Ponteland Committee is celebrating 25 years of fundraising which has seen £115,000 raised with the loyal support of many local residents.

The local landmark coincides with the 150th anniversary of Thomas Barnardo starting his work with destitute children in London, following an outbreak of cholera.

Across the UK Barnardos has helped 240,000 children, young people and their families and runs 960 services - many of these in the North-East helped by money raised by the Ponteland committee.

Barclays Bank recently handed over a cheque for £980 in match funding to members of the Barnardos Ponteland committee following our ladies lunch at Horton Grange.

JUST TWO WEEKS LEFT TO COMMENT ON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN VISION

Residents and businesses have just two weeks left to comment on a vision and set of objectives for the future development of Ponteland.

An online questionnaire can be completed at pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk and hard copies sent out with last month's Pont News are also available at the Town Council offices and the library.

The vision and objectives, which cover the environment, housing, employment, transport, education and healthcare, are the culmination of a three year process managed by Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Group, a group of volunteers working on behalf of the Town Council.

It is the final consultation stage before PNPG produces a full draft Neighbourhood Plan for Ponteland Civil Parish. This will be subject to a six week consultation and scrutiny by an independent examiner. If passed it will go to a full referendum and if more than 50% of voters support it, the plan will be adopted and become part of Local Development Plan for the area.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The 2016 Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership will be held on Wednesday May 18th at 7pm in Ponteland Town Council Committee Room, Meadowfield industrial estate.

Nominations for membership of the Executive Council for the posts of Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer are being sought as well as members of the Management Committee and should be submitted in writing no later than May 4th to: Mrs Shirley Hill, Hon. Secretary, Ponteland Community Partnership, 90 Runnymede Road, Ponteland, NE20 9HH.

We are a group of volunteers all with a strong community spirit who wish to reach out to all residents, working with other local groups, and engage with projects and events for young and old to enhance their quality of life. Do come along and meet us. You will be made most welcome.

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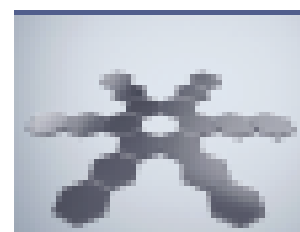
The science behind 'PhotoFusion' Zeiss' latest self-tinting glasses

Also known as photochromic lenses, self-tinting lenses have been around since the 1930's.



The most significant discovery made by scientist Walther Kolb and his colleagues was that silver chloride reacts in a predictable way when exposed to light. Ever since then, a lot has happened in view of the quality and performance of self-tinting lenses and they are extremely popular amongst many people who are dependent on their glasses, and are constantly going indoors and outdoors.

Zeiss PhotoFusion can be relied upon to give you 100% UV protection

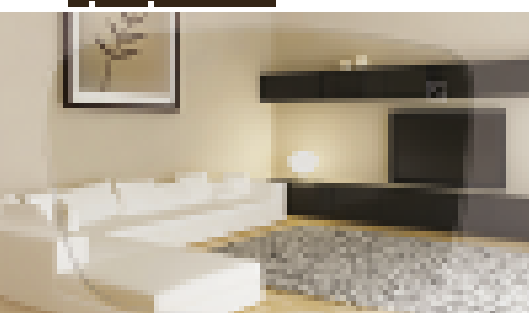


UV radiation is invisible. Self-tinting lenses absorb invisible rays of UV light. When the UV rays, the lenses are activated and the molecules turn brown blocks the UV rays. The darker the brown, the better the protection. Self-tinting lenses are activated automatically in changing light conditions. And of course, whether the lenses are clear or dark.

PhotoFusion lenses provide 100% UV protection.

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Woodland walk leads to huge display of daffodils

By Muriel Sobo

The Monday Walkers of Ponteland Leisure Learning (U3A) explored a fascinating ancient semi-natural woodland of about 14 acres near Dipton Mill.

Called Letah Wood, and managed by the Woodland Trust, it is said to be the most northerly habitat of native daffodils in England.

Cultivated daffodils have made a great show this year and lasted for quite some time but there is no comparison with the delicate more muted colours and form of the native variety.

They are beautiful, and to see carpets of them in a mainly beech and oak woodland interspersed with green carpets of garlic almost ready to flower is very uplifting; members of the group were delighted to have the pleasure of a walk taking in this unique sight.

We were accompanied by a loud woodpecker in the wood and larks in the pasture outside. The walk of about three miles started and finished at the Dipton Mill pub, just two miles south of Hexham, where we were refreshed with an excellent selection of sandwiches and drinks.



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Merton Hall volunteer couple receive award for 'sterling work'

A couple who have worked for many years as volunteers at Merton Hall have received a prestigious accolade from the Mayor of Ponteland.

Peter and Val Riley help with the running of events and general upkeep of the popular Ponteland community venue.

Praising their "sterling work", Coun Carl Rawlings presented the Town Council's 2016 Meritorious Award along with a bouquet of flowers and said: "Val and Peter have worked in the hall for some years on tasks such as the volunteer rota,

functions, book service and general handyman assistance on items such as tables and chairs.

"They are well regarded by the team of volunteers, they communicate well and work hard to keep Merton Hall a safe and pleasant place to visit. It therefore gives the Town Council great pleasure in presenting this small token of appreciation."

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Rower represents region: Will, pictured front in the white shirt.

Will represents region in national rowing finals

Ponteland High School rower Will Viney is off to Nottingham to compete for the North-East in the British Rowing Junior Inter-Regional Regatta.

The Year 9 student secured his place at the finals being held at the National Water Sports Centre after winning the double sculls in the Ponteland Junior Head time trial on the River Tyne with Tyne United teammate Michael Bessent.

The pair have been selected to represent Northern Rowing, and they will compete against the best boats in their age group from each of the other 11 British Rowing regions.

FUTSAL FINALIST ALEX ON TARGET



Ponteland schoolboy Alex Richardson could be on his way to playing for England after picking up a runners-up medal in a national futsal tournament.

The Year 9 student played for the FA Regional North and East Yorkshire Deaf and Partially Sighted Futsal team at the tournament held at the Birmingham Futsal Centre.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "Alex is in his first year at Ponteland High School and has made a great start, impressing everyone with his enthusiasm and positive attitude. I am sure these characteristics will be essential to him as he continues to progress, hopefully to represent his country."

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San Marzano DOP tomatoes enjoy the same protection under EU law as Champagne. The tomatoes can only be grown in the Sarno-Nocerno Valleys where the volcanic soil is specially fertile thanks to Mount Vesuvius. There are many other regulations which must be complied with for DOP certification, which means that the tomatoes used in Haveli's curries are the finest available anywhere in the world. After all, great ingredients make for great food.

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