

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Ponteland celebrates
Queen's 90th birthday

Fears raised over reported
crime increase

Husband of Sally Allan thanks
community for support

**‘Hybrid’ system of two
and three tier schools
proposed by NCC**



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Ponteland celebrates Queen's 90th birthday in style

Ponteland celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday in style, with garden parties, fireworks, floral displays and the lighting of the beacon on St Mary's Church.

Local businesses joined in the celebrations, decorating their shop fronts with bunting and flags, while the Rotary Club joined forces with the Senior Gentleman's Club and Dobbies to create a beautiful set of flower beds outside the garden centre entrance.

On April 21st the Mayor Carl Rawlings and Deputy Mayor Joyce Butcher delivered red, white and blue bouquets to the five nursing homes in Ponteland - Abbeyfield, Royal Hampton, Grange Lea, Bradbury Court and Ponteland Manor.

The Mayor attended the official opening of Royal Hampton in the afternoon and then visited Henderson Court, where a tree was planted in the gardens to commemorate the Royal event.

Coun Rawlings also enjoyed a public garden party at Ponteland Manor, with afternoon tea, entertainment and a special 90th birthday cake for resident Rosemary Adams – born the same day as the Queen.

The Town Council arranged the lighting of the Beacon at 7.30pm on the top of St. Mary's Church - one of over 1,000 beacons lit across the country following the first lit by the Queen at Windsor Castle.

Then at 9pm fireworks were set off behind Rialtos, watched by hundreds on Coates Green, with special menus and drinks on offer at the Diamond Inn, Rialtos and the Blackbird.

Cover shot and p3 photos by The Image Farm.



Coun Rawlings enjoys afternoon tea with Rosemary Adams



Concerns raised over rise in reported crime

PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager



There have been 37 crimes reported for the Ponteland and surrounding area in April. These break down to the following offences:

- One attempted burglary to dwelling
- Three burglaries to business premises
- Two thefts from motor vehicles
- Two thefts in dwelling
- Four thefts (other)
- Six shoplifting
- One make off without payment
- Four damage to dwelling
- One arson
- One damage to motor vehicle
- Six assaults
- One assault police
- One harassment offence
- One communication offence
- One sexual offence
- Two possession of cannabis.

A man and woman have been arrested and bailed in relation to two linked burglaries at business premises. A man has been arrested and charged with the assault on the police officer, and two men have been arrested and bailed re thefts from motor vehicles.

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Concerns over increased crime levels

There have been concerns raised regarding the increase in crime statistics as reported in this column. The figures used to compile the report encompass not only Ponteland but also the outlying villages of Medburn, Prestwick, Kirkley, Whalton, Belsay, Capheaton, Matfen and Stamfordham.

Local residents are right to be concerned should there be an increase in crime or reported anti-social behaviour in the area. As local officer, I want to ensure there are fewer victims of crime and that the community is free from crime and anti-social behaviour. Positive action continues to be taken to deal with offenders effectively.

Northumbria Police has also adopted a more stringent application of crime recordings in line with nationally agreed Home Office Crime Recording (HOCR) standards.

These include recording crimes where the victim refuses to support an investigation or prosecution, for offenders aged under ten, and reports of cyber bullying, malicious communications or harassment type offences.

As a result there are a number of assaults, harassment and communication offences reported each month where police respect the wishes of the victim and either offer words of advice to offending party or take no action at all. Acquisitive crime or impact crimes (eg burglary and thefts) do vary with occasional 'spikes' and seasonal trends.

Anti-social behaviour issues

There are continued reports of youth related ASB and damage occurring in Ponteland Park and Merton Way. Police are aware of issues and are directing patrols to the area. A male youth was arrested following a breach of an ASB related injunction. Three youths have also been sent warning letters. Further to recent reports of reports of nuisance motorcycles, two riders have been issued with car seize warnings for riding off road. A rider has also had his motorcycle seized following a previous warning.

Community Speedwatch

Community Speedwatch volunteers monitored approx. 200 vehicles in the area in April, resulting in eight warning letters to motorists.

Local police surgeries will take place on the following dates:

Sat 28th May 9.30am–10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland with CSO Paul Cotterill

Sat 28th May 11am–12noon Co-op, Broadway with CSO Paul Cotterill

Sat 11th June 10am–11am Waitrose, Ponteland with PC Lee Davison

Sat 11th June 11.30am–12.30pm Belsay shop with PC Lee Davison

Contact the Ponteland Neighbourhood Team:

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A visual of the proposed combined primary and secondary school and community facility.

Ponteland to get 'hybrid' system of two and three tier schools

Parents in Ponteland will get the choice of two or three tier education for their children from next year under new proposals from Northumberland County Council.

A report from the Director of Education Andy Johnson to the May 24th meeting of the council's cabinet has recommended the authority broadly follows the wishes of the individual school governing bodies in their responses to the recent restructure consultation.

This would mean Darras Hall First School, Ponteland First School, Heddon on the Wall St Andrews CE First School and Richard Coates CE Middle School would all convert to become primary schools starting September 2017 and Ponteland High School would become an 11-18 secondary school from September 2019.

But Belsay First School, Stamfordham First School and Whalton CE First School will remain as first schools. Ponteland Middle School, as an academy independent of the local education authority, can remain as a middle school and take children from these first schools - and others it makes arrangements with - at year five.

The report does warn of the potential for lack of places at the new secondary school for children leaving PMS aged 13, and says there would be other places at 13-18 high schools in Newcastle, Morpeth and Prudhoe with school transport provided.

It proposes a £55.1m budget for new school buildings, to include:

- a combined primary and secondary school with leisure and community facilities on the existing leisure centre site (£46.7m)
- a new build for Darras Hall First School on the existing site (£6.8m)

- extension works to accommodate additional pupils together with additional hard surface play areas and parking at Heddon First School (£1.1m)
- £499,000 for the remodelling of the Richard Coates Middle School building to provide early years education, during transition phase, with relocation costs associated with the move to the Ponteland First School building.

There will be a further formal four week public consultation following publication of the Statutory Proposals with a report brought back to NCC's cabinet on July 12th for a final decision.

During the six week consultation on the proposed move to two tier which ended on May 11th, the council received 2,612 consultation response forms. Of these, 1,308 were from parents and 539 from pupils with the vast majority against change.

There was also a petition submitted by the POPS parent campaign group with 2,615 signatures against the closure of Ponteland Middle School, which was part of the original consultation proposals prior to it securing the protection of academy status.

Other submissions included feedback from headteachers and staff, with 139 responses were received from groups of staff and individual staff members and six from individual headteachers.

Coun Robert Arkless, cabinet member for children's services at NCC, said: "We have listened very carefully to all the views expressed. I am delighted that so many people have engaged in the process, showing their passion for children's education.

"Schools in the partnership asked us to run an open consultation and that is what we have done. We want to support schools to provide the best possible education for all children.

"As a council we don't have a policy on the form of school organisation. Our overall aim is to make sure that our young people get the best possible education, in the best possible

environments. We simply want to support schools to enable them to improve standards.”

Lynn Blain, headteacher of Ponteland First School, welcomed the new proposals. She said: “We welcome the investment in Ponteland schools and leisure services which will contribute towards getting the best possible outcomes for Ponteland pupils. When developed effectively, the spaces children learn in have the potential to transform the way pupils learn; at the same time giving powerful messages about school expectations, values and beliefs. This significant investment in Ponteland schools gives the powerful message that we expect the very best from our pupils in return.”

Kieran McGrane, headteacher of Ponteland Community High School, was also in support: “It is very exciting to read about the plans to invest a substantial sum of money within Ponteland; not only for a new primary and secondary school but also the rebuild of Darras Hall First School and investment in other sites. Our students deserve the best facilities we can provide for them and this is an opportunity to do just that.

“I recently visited Consett Academy which is a shared site for a 11-18 school and community leisure centre and gained an insight into what our students might expect. The build and set up was fantastic and the use of the leisure centre has hugely enhanced the quality of sports provision for students but also for the local community too.”

But he warned that having the two systems could mean nearly half of the pupils leaving Year 8 at Ponteland Middle School would have to look elsewhere for a high school as PCHS would probably only be able to accommodate around 80 of the 150 pupils from PMS.

Dr Caroline Pryer, headteacher of Ponteland Middle School, criticised the county council’s handling of the consultation process and its outcome. She said: “Ponteland Middle School received this report and note that it foretells a fragmented education system and not a cohesive provision worthy of what the parents demand and children deserve.



“We are grateful to the parents, Town Council and community for their contribution to the campaign. We are sorry that there are casualties within staffing and governing bodies but the process was rushed and poorly executed, causing much upset, confusion and error. We sincerely hope the disunity caused by this can be healed in time to allow all schools to work in a genuine partnership again for the benefit of the children.”

Ponteland county councillor Peter Jackson was also heavily critical. Speaking on behalf of Ponteland’s four Conservative county councillors, he said: “It is clear to us that the county council has rushed this consultation process through in the minimal amount of time.

“We will as local county councillors have to digest this mish-mash which will be imposed on the whole of the Ponteland area. Local people and their children are going to be affected by the results of this for years to come.”

What do you think? Write to Your letters...



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Enjoy a family fun day at Party in the Park

Organisers of one of Ponteland's biggest annual events - the Party in the Park - are hoping for warm weather to attract another record crowd next month.

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 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.

Children enjoy the fair rides at last year's event.



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Elizabeth in live final of BBC story writing competition

Young author Elizabeth Quigley has beaten tens of thousands of entrants to make the final of a BBC story writing competition.

The 13-year-old is among 25 finalists in the 10-13 age category attending the live final of Radio 2's 500 Word competition at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London on May 27th.

Her shortlisted story, called 'A Stellar Job', is about a man whose job it is to create the stars in the sky after people die.

Proud mum Mary explained how Elizabeth came to take part the national competition, which attracted 123,000 entries. She said: "We listen to the Chris Evans Show on the way to school so heard the competition being announced. She likes creative writing so thought she would give it a go."

And her inspiration for the story?

"She says she was trying to think about what would be a really cool job and then thought about what if it was someone's job to create the stars. It just flowed from there."

Judges at the final include the Duchess of Cornwall, Malorie Blackman, Charlie Higson, Frank Cottrell-Boyce and Francesca Simon and the winning three entries are to be announced live on the Chris Evans Breakfast Show.

The winner receives Chris Evans' height in books and 500 books for their school library – which would be well received at Ponteland Community Middle School, where Elizabeth is a Year 8 pupil.

A big fan of the Suzanne Collins' Hunger Game books, JK Rowling, Helen Dunmore, Malorie Blackman and David Walliams, Elizabeth also likes to write comic strips and hopes to train as an architect. She will be accompanied to the final with parents Mary and Paul.

Her entry can be read and heard here: bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/5fJWPHh9tGHIQ2b6Tgff8Xs/a-stellar-job

BBC 500 Words finalist Elizabeth Quigley. Photo by The Image Farm.

Smaller affordable homes needed say residents

People living in Ponteland Parish want any new housing built in future to include smaller and more affordable homes.

That is one of the key findings of a major housing needs survey by Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Group. Forms were sent out to 4,550 households with April's Pont News and nearly 1,300 were returned – an excellent response rate of more than 28%.

Respondents said they had little desire to move, but if they did it would be due to downsizing, retirement or family issues. But there is a distinct lack of the two-bed properties they would want in the area.

A need for improved public transport links was also highlighted, with bus users unhappy with the frequency, punctuality and stop locations saying they would also welcome a link to the Metro system.

PNPG also asked for feedback on its vision and ten objectives for the environment, housing, economy, transport, healthcare, education and facilities – as detailed in the April issue of PNV – at well attended drop-in events held from April 21st to 23rd.

There was overwhelming support for a multipurpose community hub in a central village position to include the library, council offices, coffee shop, CAB and community space.

Proposed additional parking for retail and service provision in close proximity to the village centre and a Metro link and increased bus service were also well supported.

This is part of the final stage consultation before PNPG, a group of volunteers working on behalf of the Town Council, 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.

For more information visit
pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Concern over revised redevelopment plans for the village and an increase in reported crime in this month's letters...

Revised plans for Callerton Lane area need urgent rethink

On the question of the ongoing debate about the future of Ponteland's schools, lack of expertise with regard to teaching structures makes me hesitate to cast my vote for either a two or three tier solution but suffice to say that if we ask our children which of the local schools they most enjoyed, all three will plump for Ponteland Middle.

Given that the efforts of staff, managers and pupils at this school seem to have resulted in the creation of one of the best educational establishments in the county it must be particularly disheartening for these people to discover that the LEA has plans to close them down.

One can understand why Ponteland Middle may have decided to go for academy status, thereby freeing themselves from local authority control altogether.

As part of the overall consultation, the county council has published a revised layout plan for the land areas east of Callerton Lane and it is a relief to see that the Dobbies roundabout option has been cast aside in favour of a concentration of new school and leisure premises closer to the village centre.

However, it is all too apparent that an attempt is being made to cram far too many facilities within a limited space, with little or no attempt to retain and protect important existing features.

The leisure centre car park, which doubles as a subsidiary area of parking serving the village, is obliterated along with most of the mature tree and hedgerow planting that encloses this space.

The tightness of the overall layout would mean that much of the tree planting within the site and running down Callerton Lane would be lost, particularly

given that gaping holes are to be punched through the tree/hedgerow line to provide access to two new car parks together with parking for buses.

This is particularly unwise given that there would seem to be no reason why the existing car and bus park, which is but a few yards up the road, cannot remain in effective use.

In order to accommodate one of the new parking areas the country walk has had to be diverted around the fire station with the result that there would no longer be a continuous pedestrian route running down to the Memorial Hall and beyond. The delightfully landscaped fire station site becomes a sea of tarmac.

The quality, scale and maturity of the elements of landscape that currently grace this area comprise a significant environmental asset, one that makes an immeasurable contribution to the character of the place. The ugly insensitivity of these latest layout proposals beggars belief; they are in urgent need of a rethink.

John Hague
High View, Darras Hall

Staggering rise in reported crime

We emigrated to Thropton last December after some 35 years in and around Pont.

You kindly email me a link to the magazine online every month and we look forward to reading the latest news.

However, something has caught my eye and a quick study has, in my opinion, shown up a staggering rise in the crime stats. Either more crimes are being reported or the place is changing for the worse - and that would be very sad.

Pont is still a bastion of good conduct overall and we wish you well.

David Halliday

Thropton

* See PC Lee Davison's column on p4

Shame residents can't support Charity Group's concerts

I was very disappointed that the NE Music Festival (celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday) was cancelled due to lack of support.

There was to be a concert at the Racecourse and a two choir concert in the Cathedral with the proceeds going to the Great North Air Ambulance. What a shame that the residents of Ponteland cannot be bothered to support Ponteland Charity Group which organises these events.

K Ross
Eland Edge, Darras Hall

Thanks for your letter of support

Referring to the letter from correspondent Christine Tweedle in the May issue about the low turnout at the Queen's 90th birthday concert at the URC on April 8th, the Trustees of Pont Charity Group would like to express their thanks for her kind words.

We do indeed depend on support from Ponteland folks and take this opportunity to thank all our supporters.

People may not have realised that the instigator was violinist Kate Chruscicka, who lost her father and grandfather to cancer and readily accepted to perform without charge at this celebratory concert in Ponteland for the Queen, the Patron of Cancer Research.

Bruce Grant
Secretary, Pont Charity Group
Old Station Court, Darras Hall

July issue deadlines: Delivery of the July issue will start on Thursday June 30th and be completed by Tuesday July 5th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Thursday June 16th. 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 July issue.

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

What's on...

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on Wednesday June 1st is David Butler and his subject 'The Battle of Neville's Cross'. 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.

Ponteland Bowling Club

On Saturday June 4th Ponteland Bowling Club in Darras Road, Ponteland, next to the Memorial Hall, will be hosting another free 'Bowls for Fun' mornings 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

Belsay Hall Croquet Club

It's National Croquet Day on Sunday June 5th and Belsay Hall Croquet Club are offering the chance to try your hand at this fascinating game. All equipment is provided; you just need to wear flat soled shoes. Members of English Heritage can just turn up at the lawns anytime during the day. Non-members should e-mail belsaycroquet@gmail.com or ring David Millener on (0191) 2365374 to arrange escorted access to the Belsay Hall site.

Ponteland Business Network

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

Celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday at Merton Hall

To mark the Queen's 90th birthday, you are invited to celebrate with Merton Hall on June 11th from 12.30pm to 2.30pm. There will be entertainment, a raffle in aid of Marie Curie, as well as sandwiches and cake. All are welcome to this event free of charge. You always receive a warm welcome at Merton Hall coffee mornings from Monday to Saturday 9.30am to 11.15am. Have a hot drink, read the papers and enjoy meeting friends old and new. A hot drink (plus a refill) is still only 30p.

Party in the Park

The 14th party at Ponteland Park 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. See article on p8.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker at 2.30pm on Monday June 13th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, is Paul Fallon and his subject 'Gas on the Western Front – Yesterday's Endeavour and Today's Legacy'.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday June 14th we welcome Patricia Hodgson who is going to talk to us about planting summer containers and baskets. 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'.

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. We next meet at Ponteland Town Council offices at 7pm on Wednesday June 15th. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirley@reevehill.plus.com

Friends of Kirkley Hall

On Wednesday June 15th at 7pm at Kirkley Hall Paul Morrison, who has been involved in the management of Coquet Island for 30 years, will talk about the seabird sanctuary that has no public access. Cost £5 for non-members. To book a place ring Brenda Parke on (01661) 853489.

A Folk Extravaganza

The Donna Kimberley School of Highland Dancing, Scottish folk singer Stephen Quigg, Roddy Matthews and Paul Capaldi perform at the Memorial Hall at 7pm on Saturday June 25th. Tickets costing £10 in aid of the Alzheimer's Society from Geoff Steven, 25 Main Street, Ponteland, or online using Eventbrite. Enquiries to grant.darras@gmail.com

Music in the Park

Sunday June 26th from 2.30pm to 5.30pm at Ponteland Park. Free musical entertainment from Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel Band, Ponteland Community Band and The Ringtones. See advert on p13.

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 June: 5th, 19th, 26th. Sunday school and kids activities available. Call Tim or Kay on (01661) 822057,

email thebridge.ponteland@gmail.com, find us on Facebook or check out our stall at Party in the Park on June 12th.

Kirkley WI

There will be no meeting at Kirkley Hall in June as the WI has its annual summer outing. Six members of Ballywalter WI in Northern Ireland will be joining us for a few days and we will take them with us for our day out in Cumbria. The WI will meet again at Kirkley Hall in July.

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.

Audio Book Group

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

Ponteland Ladies' Choir

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

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.

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.



ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

Coun Carl Rawlings and Coun Joyce Butcher were both re-elected unanimously as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively for 2016-17. They thanked their colleagues for their continued support.

GRANTS

Coach travel for Ponteland schools to participate in annual county sports event

The Council had been approached by the School Sports Programme Manager to ask if they would be prepared to meet the cost of coach travel for the five schools in Ponteland to attend a school sports event in Cramlington on the 21st and 22nd June. Due to a change in NCC budgets it was not possible to meet these costs this year. The Town Council agreed to meet the costs of coach travel in the sum of £550 as a one off grant only with £250 from the Mayor's account and £300 from the small grants budget.

DATES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR 2016-17

Dates for Town Council meetings were approved by the Council, and will be held on the second Wednesday of each month at 6.45pm.

QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY UPDATE

An update report on events held in Ponteland

to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday was presented. Councillors agreed that Ponteland had really got into the spirit of the celebrations and thanks were given to all those who had participated. Events still to be held included a 'Clean for the Queen' day on May 21st and a community service on May 22nd. A treasure hunt for children is being held on Saturday June 11th in the Park with a Royal theme, with details on the Council website and Facebook.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Highways Working Party, which met on April 15th, had considered various colour options for painting the Darras Road bridge but the decision was deferred to allow members more time to select their preferred choice. A gateway scheme for Ponteland had been proposed by the County Council for installation on North Road, close to the new housing development. The two options were presented to the Town Council and option 2 was preferred.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party, which met on April 18th, had considered a report on works on the footpath at bridge one in the Park – a steep area subject to flooding. The Environment Agency had given approval to the scheme and a quote received in the sum of £1620.47 was approved. A recommendation to install artificial grass on the large middle planter at Merton Way in the sum of £1,870 plus the cost of power washing the planter and installation

of planters was also agreed.

PONTELAND LIBRARY

Members of Ponteland Community Trust had met with the NCC Chief Executive about relocation of the library, which is moving to the Leisure Centre at the end of June. Discussions would continue with NCC about the library.

SCHOOLS CONSULTATION

Responding to the NCC consultation on schools in Ponteland, the majority of Councillors favoured the retention of the current three tier system. They felt elements of the response form were confusing and expressed their disappointment that the same wording in respect of question 8 had not been used in respect of the paper form and the electronic version. They also felt that the County Council was in a better position to suggest alternatives to the proposals rather than ask consultees for suggestions as requested in question 10. The Council also favoured the High School being rebuilt on the playing fields within the curtilage of the current school. They also expressed the wish that as Ponteland Middle School had achieved Academy status that there should be a clear pathway for pupils of that school to Ponteland High School.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on May 11th.



at the
PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL
7.00pm
SATURDAY 25th JUNE 2016
in aid of
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You are invited to a

Vintage Tea Dance

To celebrate the Queen's 90th Birthday

Saturday 9th July 2016

Ponteland Methodist Church

1pm-4pm



1940's @50's dress optional, (prize for best dressed!)

Music by award winning Radio Tyneside

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MUSIC IN THE PARK

Sunday 26 June
from 2.30pm to 5.30pm
at Ponteland Park

Music from:

Rendezvous Jazz Band
North Tyneside Steel Band
Ponteland Community Band
The Ringtones

Bring a picnic and enjoy a fantastic afternoon's outdoor entertainment with friends and family.

In the event of bad weather the event will be cancelled

**FREE
EVENT**

Husband of Sally Allan thanks community for support

A father-of-three has paid tribute to the community of Ponteland for the support given to his family since his wife took her own life last Christmas.

The shock disappearance of Sally Allan in the early hours of Boxing Day sparked national headlines and a huge search operation.

But sadly it was to end in tragedy when, after seven weeks, the 59-year-old's body was found in the River Tyne near Jarrow. It is believed she walked ten miles to enter the river by the Swing Bridge on Newcastle Quayside early on Boxing Day morning.

Husband Gordon said both himself and their children Clive, Claire and David had taken great comfort from the outpouring of public support since they lost Sally.

He said: "The love, care and support at times has been overwhelming and without doubt it has given the family and myself the willpower to carry on and face the future with a positive outlook.

"There are so many people to thank in the Ponteland community - people who gave up their family Christmas holiday to join in the search for Sally, people who used their Facebook or Twitter connections to spread the word to help find Sally and the people who sent us messages of support by email, social media or just called round to our house (often with cake or a meal) to let us know they were there for us.

"The response from the community was overwhelming - the police said they had never seen such a large scale public search for a missing person in the North East. Thank you for that support."

Born Sally Hill in Reading in 1956, the mother-of-three moved up to Ponteland from Surrey with her family in 1962.



Sally in happier times on holiday in Islay last year.

Her grandparents Harold and Maggie Hoyle moved up later and lived for many years on Greenacres in Darras Hall.

She attended the old Coates Endowed Primary School before passing her 11-plus and going to Walbottle. Young Sally was a member of the brownies, guides, badminton club and every Sunday attended St Mary's, where she

was confirmed and married Gordon in 1978.

A founding member of Ponteland Swimming Club, Sally also provided help at Beavers, Brownies and Guides, attended the Ad Murum choir in Heddon and as an unpaid volunteer ran Castle Morpeth Enterprises, which provided work placed training for adults with

learning disabilities. A keen walker and cyclist, Sally would regularly be seen on the old railway line on her way to the village where she would often stop and chat to friends old and new.

Gordon said: "Having lived in Ponteland since 1962, Sally was well known to many people who above all remembered her as a smiling,

caring, friendly person who loved to stop for a chat; she was an old fashioned social networker well before the advent of Facebook and social media.

"Once it was confirmed that Sally had tragically taken her own life the support did not fade away but remained as strong as ever with the family receiving literally thousands of messages of sympathy and support. To those who sent messages of support, a big thank you.

"However, I would particularly like to thank those people who wrote or told me about their own, or their family's mental health problems, some included suicide. Those personal stories did help me to begin to understand what Sally may have been going through and have helped me come to terms with what has happened. The warmth and support in the messages did and continues to help the family with our grief whilst

giving us the strength to carry on and rebuild our lives."

Gordon said the family's campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues had also been very well supported, and he thanked the 950 people who had helped them raise nearly £18,000 for the charity Mind.

He also thanked the 350 people who attended the Memorial Service for Sally at St Mary's on February 7th, saying she would have been "astounded" and "embarrassed", and praised the Vicar at St Mary's Peter Barham for doing "so much to ensure the service met the needs of the family on the most emotional of days".

Gordon added: "Finally, let us remember Sally as a Ponteland lass who lived here for 53 years. Ponteland will be a quieter place without her, so if you see me out and about please stop and say hello. Ponteland as a community thank you for your support."



Sally (2nd right) at the family home in Western Way in the 1960s with (l-r) mum Muriel, brother Martin, sister Kath, brother Sam and dad Brian.



At Newcastle Quayside are (l-r) Clive, Claire, Gordon and David Allan.



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Beer festival pulls in record crowds

The third annual Ponteland Beer Festival pulled in record crowds of more than 2,500.

The two-day festival on April 22nd and 23rd included more than 150 beers, lagers and ciders, a Prosecco and wine bar, live music and top quality food. Next year's event will be part of the 50th anniversary celebrations for Ponteland Rugby Club.

Organiser Andy Maidwell said: "Once again we were overwhelmed by the huge support from all our sponsors, businesses and friends in the community, as well as former players, for making it such a wonderful event. Everyone seemed to have a great time. We are already looking forward to another successful festival in 2017. It will be a fitting way to celebrate five decades of rugby at Ponteland, a marvellous milestone."

Entertainment came from Dunston Silver Band, the Richard Kain Band, Ponteland Community Wind Band, North Star and the Proper Boys, with Ponteland also playing their last home game of the season against Consett.

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BBC broadcaster at Friends of Ponteland Park AGM

Muriel Sobo

In the 11 years since the formation of Friends of Ponteland Park the community has seen huge improvements in plantings, seasonal colour, the treescape and wildlife.

The Friends are committed and knowledgeable volunteers who have worked to bring this about. There is a membership of over 240 and many organisations make donations of money, plants or time.

Waitrose, Cowells and Ponteland Print have been consistent supporters and last year the WI and FOPP planted a WI donation of 2,000 crocus and 250 daffodil bulbs to celebrate their 95th year. The Town Council are responsible for the Park and its upkeep.

BBC radio broadcaster and Ponteland resident Marian Foster spoke at the well attended FOPP AGM last month about her lifelong association with gardening and broadcasting.

FOPP are always looking for new volunteers - to join contact Alma Prickett (01661) 825129 or email brpandajp@talktalk.net or visit thefriendsofpontelandpark.org.uk

Marathon mums raise funds for Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Two mums from Ponteland Runners are taking part in the Edinburgh marathon this weekend to raise funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust.

It will be the first marathon for Ponteland solicitor Victoria Grace, 37, and Heidi Finlay, 38, a teacher from Chapel House whose eldest son Joel, eight, has the condition and faces a daily routine of tablets, physio, nebulizers and trips to the hospital.



Victoria and Heidi at a previous charity run.

The run follows a charity dinner held at Rialto's restaurant in Ponteland last month attended by 100 women which raised over £1,300 for CFT, thanks to generously donated prizes from local businesses including The Badger, Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens, Hooker & Young and Sweet Things by Tina.

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a life-limiting inherited condition caused by a faulty gene that controls the movement of salt and water in and out of cells. This causes mucus to gather in the lungs and digestive system and creates a range of challenging symptoms.

If anyone would like to sponsor Heidi and Victoria for their marathon, please visit justgiving.com/heidi-victoria or text CFHV99 £5 to 70070.

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U15 girls win the cup!


Ponteland United U15 Girls have won another trophy in only their second season.

Last year they won Le Championette league and now the girls have won the Wade Financial Trophy, after beating Newcastle East End 2-1 in the cup final.

The team has also just welcomed a new sponsor - The Mogul Raj Indian restaurant in Ponteland.

The players, all from Ponteland High School, are: Holly Huntley; Hollie Foggin; Georgia Lynch; Katie Crozier; Chloe Butterfield; Yasmeen Amer (goalkeeper); Amelia Smith; Victoria Lynch and captain Emma Robson.

The team is managed by Stephen Smith, who is looking for new players to join for next season. If you are in Years 9 or 10 and are interested, come to training from 6pm to 7pm on a Thursday evening on the new Ponteland 3G pitch, also the team's home venue – or email stephen.footballpufc@yahoo.co.uk




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LGBT campaign wins national award for Pont teens

A group of North-East teenagers have won a national award after creating a hard-hitting film to raise awareness of LGBT issues.

The 16-strong Team Brah (Begin Reuniting All Homeless) includes five Ponteland High School A-level students - May Blair, Maria Higgins, Tom Wiltshire, Max Lillico and Thomas Buck.

The film, which uses Lego as a metaphor for the group's motto 'your sexuality is a piece of you', was part of a 30 hour social action project for the National Citizens Service which aimed to provide an insight on the difficult life of a young person struggling with telling those around them about their sexuality and fearing the rejection that might follow.

Other activity included making and selling 200 string bracelets, a sponsored walk and busking in Newcastle city centre, raising £850 for local charity the Albert Kennedy Trust, which deals with under 25s LGBT homelessness.

The group also set up social media pages, including Twitter, Instagram and a Facebook page which gained over 300 likes, to raise awareness.

Team Brah was chosen as the winner by a team of judges from sponsors Santander, who evaluated each nominated group on creativity, impact on the community and future development.

May and Maria attended the National Social Action Stars awards ceremony at NCS Yes Live at The Roundhouse Camden in London, broadcast on 4Music, with star guests including singers Tinie Tempah, Jess Glynn and Craig David and famous Youtubers.

Kim Smith, Contract Director at NCS North East said, "I am really thrilled that NCS graduates from the North East are flying the flag for our region. We have witnessed hundreds of amazing social action projects that have made a real difference to our communities. To be crowned as the best project across the whole of the country is testament to the hard work and commitment that the group has shown."

You can hear more about the group's story at <https://youtu.be/y6c7eYimjM4>

Award winners: May Blair (top left) and Maria Higgins (top right) of Ponteland with Team Brah.

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National medal success for Ponteland High School rower

Ponteland rower Will Viney has won a bronze medal with Tyne United teammate Michael Bessent at British Rowing's Junior Inter-Regional Regatta.

The pair were competing against the best in the country in the J14 double sculls at the National Water Sports Centre in Nottingham.

The initial time trail saw Ponteland High School year 9 pupil Will and Michael racing head to head over the 1500m course to earn a prized place in the A final.

They finished in second position behind the boat from Thames London and 15 seconds ahead of the third placed boat from the famous Henley Rowing Club, earning them a place in the A final as the fifth fastest qualifier.

The boys were unlucky to lose out on a silver medal in the A division final after catching a marker buoy line with an oar, tearing the oar handle from the rower's hand and leaving them to finish in bronze medal position - a commendable achievement after an exciting day's racing.

Will Viney (front) with Michael Bessent at the Junior Inter-Regional Regatta.

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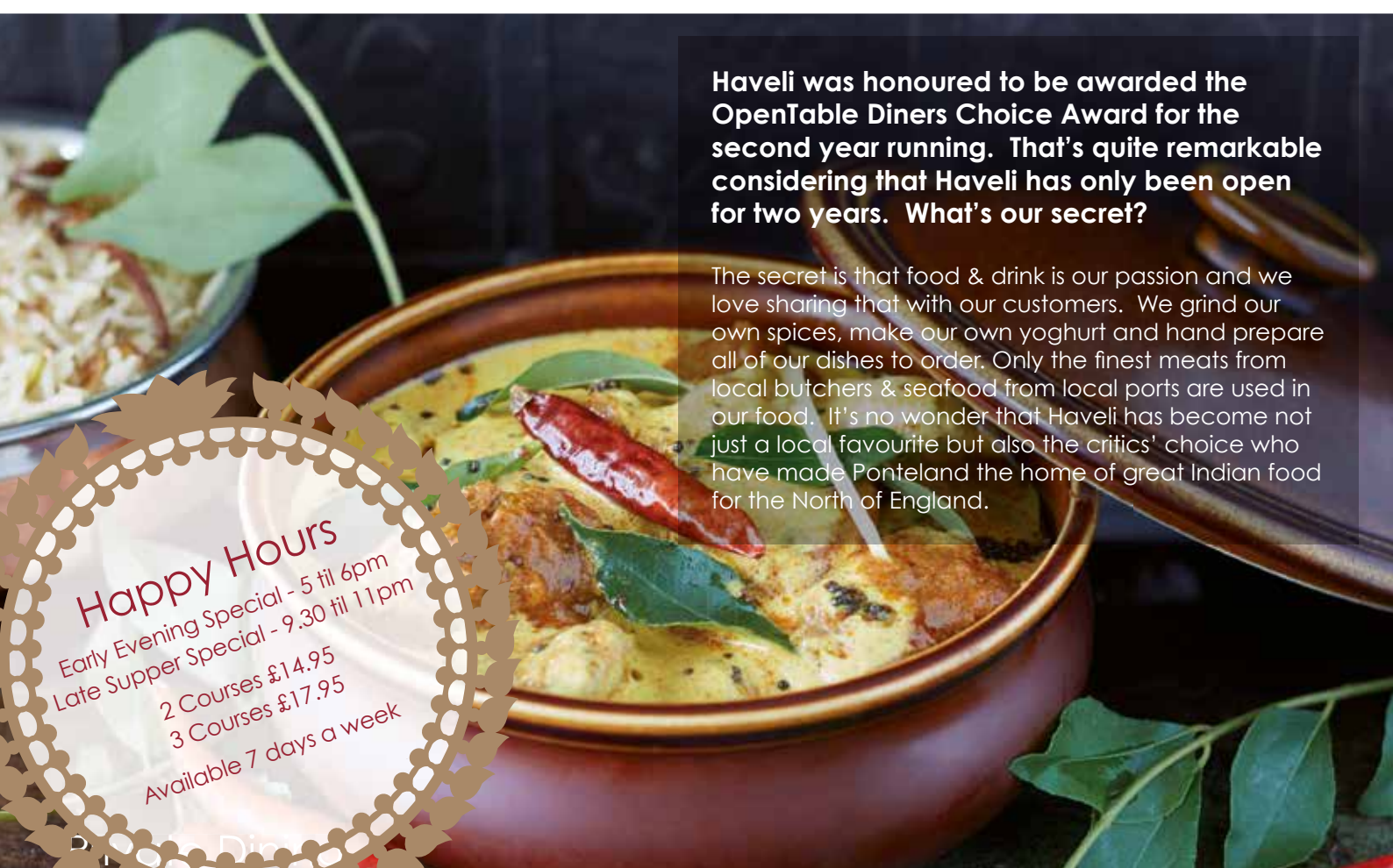
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