

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Five youths arrested in
disorder crackdown

Developer unveils 400-home
green belt scheme

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Darras Hall street at centre of huge boundary dispute



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Polished Macbeth performance 'gripping to watch'

Thirty Ponteland schoolchildren performed Macbeth at the Northern Stage Theatre in Newcastle as part of a nationwide celebration of the Bard.

The Year 6 pupils from Richard Coates CE Middle School were among 30,000 young people who took to professional stages for the Shakespeare Schools Festival during October and November.

Head of Year 6 Kate Balmforth, who runs the project each year in school, said: "The pupils' commitment to their version of Macbeth was excellent. Their teamwork, especially their support of one-another was exceptional.

"From Macbeth and Lady Macbeth delivering their Shakespearian lines with fluency and evil intent, to other actors in the ensemble moving around the stage with confidence and creativity, the performance was commented upon by the organisers as 'polished and gripping to watch'. We are exceptionally proud of all the children."





Five youths arrested in disorder crackdown

PC Charlie Cross, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager



Five youths have been arrested in a crackdown on disorder for offences including criminal damage and public order.

There were 40 reports of disorder in the month to November 11th, with the vast majority relating to youth disorder mainly on a Friday and Saturday evening in Ponteland. The five arrested were all aged between 15 and 19 and the majority of the alleged offences were committed around the Merton Way area.

The 43 reported crimes break down to the following offences:

- 11 thefts (mainly from vehicles in Ponteland)
- nine criminal damage (three to cars)
- nine assaults (mainly in the town centre)
- four communication (offences on the internet and text messages)
- four frauds (telephone frauds where banking details are asked for using various scams)
- two possession of drugs
- two racial offences
- two public order offences.

Telephone fraud scams

Just to remind you that if you are phoned by people purporting to be from the police, a genuine officer would not ask you for any bank details or ask you to arrange a money transfer. It appears that this is happening nationally and the elderly are being targeted.

Door to door salesmen

There have been a number of reports regarding door to door salesmen, in particular in the rural areas around Ponteland. Remember that you do not have to buy anything and if in doubt phone the police on 101 and we will attend to check their licences and obtain their details.

If you have any information regarding the above or any other incidents, please email easttynedale.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk or call us on 101. You can contact your Neighbourhood Team by email at charles.cross.849@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

For further information regarding events, local news, crime prevention advice and our Neighbourhood Priorities in the East Tynedale area, please visit our website at northumbria.police.uk

ROTARY XMAS MARKET THIS WEEKEND

Ponteland Rotary Club's Christmas Market is on this Saturday (December 3rd) from 11am to 3pm at the High School.

Last year's inaugural event was a huge success, with more than 40 stands, stalls and displays, as well as live music, mulled wine and Santa in his grotto.

Rotary president Suzanne Marshall thanked Ponteland Town Council for supporting the event and BMW and Mini dealership Lloyd of Newcastle for sponsoring the programme.

Shoppers at last year's Christmas Market.





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The End to a very busy year - looking to the future on the Dissington Estate

With so many organisations asking residents for opinions on a plethora of subjects we very much appreciated that so many people took time to visit our open events on the Dissington Garden Village project. We have had some very positive feedback as well as now having a better understanding of local concerns as well as community hopes and aspirations for the project. This will be invaluable as we progress the master plan and detailed designs over the coming weeks.

In November we were thrilled to formally open our new Estate Office at Prestwick Park with 5 days of information sessions showcasing our plans for Dissington Garden Village. We had a steady stream of residents from across Ponteland and from the wider estate and area who had a healthy range of questions regarding flooding issues, the relief road, detailed design matters, employment and affordable housing.

All comments and issues raised will result in further revisions to the scheme and will be fed into the final outline submission plans which we will be submitting to the planning authority later this month.

Once submitted formally to the Council, our website will include details of the application and we will also display the plans in our Estate Office and at the Leisure Centre to make the information as accessible as possible.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to visit one of our information days and also to those who viewed the documents online. We recognise and appreciate that 'change' is difficult, but hope that by listening and continuing the dialogue with local residents and businesses

we can address some of the concerns that people have outlined, but also deliver a new community of exceptional quality that becomes a valued asset to Northumberland and the wider region.

We will keep people updated as we move forward as we are committed to ensuring Dissington Garden Village delivers real benefits to as many people as possible.

Finally, and most importantly, on behalf of the Dissington Estate we would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a healthy, prosperous new year.

Dissington Estate – Improvements to public footpaths/bridleways and cycle routes

We are intent on improving these but we need your help! We would like the people who use them to tell us what they think. So if you walk the paths and know of areas that should be open but are currently closed or inaccessible we want to know – or if you ride the bridlepaths and have come across groundworks that are dangerous for your horse or gates that are locked when they should be open we want to know and similar questions for cyclists.

We want to offer a safe but interesting leisure activity and are keen to hear your views on improving and complementing the current provision.

We would welcome your views and will be providing an open house at our Estate Office at Prestwick Park (address below) on Wednesday January 11th 6pm – 9pm. Please come along and meet our public right of way design professional Tom Bailey. If you cannot attend we would welcome your thoughts via our contacts page on the website www.dissingtonestate.co.uk



Community gathers to remember war dead

The community of Ponteland, young and old, gathered to pay tribute to local service personnel who have died in battle over the last century.

The annual Remembrance Sunday service was held at the Memorial Hall following a parade from the leisure centre.

Those in attendance included representatives of the Armed Forces, veterans, Army and RAF cadets, as well as Ponteland Scouts and the Boys' Brigade.

Ponteland's churches, fire and police services, Ponteland Rotary, Ponteland Community Trust, Darras Hall Estate Committee and local community organisations including the Bowls Club, U3A, History Society, Lions and WIs were also represented.

Ponteland Mayor Carl Rawlings, accompanied by other councillors, laid a wreath on behalf of Ponteland, while Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland Caroline Pryer represented the Queen.

Following the service, attendees gathered to enjoy refreshments in the Memorial Hall.

Top middle: Deputy Lord Lieutenant Caroline Pryer and Ponteland Mayor Carl Rawlings lay wreaths at the War Memorial. Photos by The Image Farm.



Feedback sought on changes to planning blueprint at drop-in event

A drop-in event is being held in Ponteland to obtain public feedback on major changes to Northumberland County Council's Core Strategy.

Modifications include the inclusion of the proposal of a 2,000-home Garden Village on Dissington Estate, and revised plans for 400 homes and a new combined education and leisure facility on a 70-hectare site bordered by Callerton Lane, Rotary Way and Cheviot View.

Other amendments to the previous draft include changes to employment land allocations at Morpeth and junction improvements where the B6531 road meets the A69 west of Hexham.

This is the seventh public consultation on the Core Strategy, and the county council said on each occasion it has taken comments and feedback into account and adjusted details in the documents, where possible, as a result.

Coun Allan Hepple, cabinet member for economic growth at Northumberland County Council said: "The council has ambitious plans for a prosperous Northumberland founded on quality local jobs and connected communities.

"We are determined that Northumberland will grow and prosper – with more jobs, more residents of working age and a greater choice in the housing market.

"We have to ensure that the core strategy and evidence are robust, and can pass Government inspection, but most importantly can deliver these future benefits for Northumberland. We believe that these final modifications put the plan on a very firm footing for Government inspection next year. I urge everyone with a view to have their say."

Final major modifications to the Core Strategy of Northumberland's Local Plan will be consulted on until Friday December 23rd, with submission of the plan to Government then scheduled for March 2017.

Full details of the consultation are available on the council's website at:

http://northumberland-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/core_strategy/csfmm

As part of the consultation there is an informal drop in event at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Wednesday December 7th from 2pm until 7pm.

The council said it will take into account responses to this consultation during January 2017, with a submission document considered by the council in February, and forwarded to Government in March 2017. Examination by a Government inspector can then be expected during mid to late summer 2017 and formal 'adoption' in December 2017.



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Police HQ moves from Ponteland to Wallsend

The chief officer team at Northumbria Police has left its Ponteland base for the force's new headquarters in North Tyneside.

Chief Constable Steve Ashman and his chief officer team moved to the police station on Middle Engine Lane in Wallsend last month.

A police spokesman said: "From November 14, the chief officer team and their support staff will be moving to Middle Engine Lane Police Station from the current headquarters site in Ponteland.

"As the chief officers will now be based at Middle Engine Lane that station will also become our headquarters site. No other officer or staff will be moving from Ponteland and the site will continue to be used for a number of police functions.

"This move is part of a programme of moving staff away from the Ponteland site which has been ongoing for some considerable time to improve the force's efficiency. Middle Engine Lane is a very good location for our headquarters site for many reasons including its easy access to the area's major arterial roads."

The force, which is the sixth biggest in the country and serves more than 1.5m people across the region, recently launched its biggest recruitment campaign in nearly a decade - taking on more than 600 officers over the next three years.

Library in new leisure centre home

Ponteland Library has moved into its new home within the leisure centre as developers consider public feedback on plans to build 34 flats in its place.

A public exhibition was held on October 26th at the social club on Merton Road where representatives of residential developer Ascent Homes, part of Northumberland County Council-owned development company Arch, answered questions on the plans.

The Thornhill Road building closed on Wednesday November 16th and the library reopened in the leisure centre's crèche area on Monday November 21st.

NCC said the move will have numerous benefits including easy access to other services, longer opening hours for the library, and the option of self-service to keep things running smoothly at peak times.

It will move to a new permanent home as part of a £57m shared site development, to include new school buildings alongside leisure and information services on the current leisure centre site, scheduled to open in 2019.

An official opening of the relocated library was held on Monday November 28th attended by Councillor Grant Davey, Leader of the Council, Councillor Val Tyler, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, and Lorraine Dewison, Chief Executive of Active Northumberland.

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Plans for 400 home scheme unveiled

Updated proposals for a 400-home development in Ponteland's green belt were unveiled at a week-long exhibition held at the leisure centre.

Banks Property, part of regional employer the Banks Group, displayed the revised plans for its proposed West Clickemin Farm development on a 21 hectare site west of the A696 and north of the B6545.

Members of the project team were in attendance on three days to meet members of the public, answering questions and obtaining feedback. Comment forms were also collected. Copies of the revised plans have also been placed in the library and the Memorial Hall for viewing.

A planning application is expected to be submitted by Banks Property to Northumberland County Council (NCC) within the next few months.

Jeannie Kielty, development relations coordinator at the Banks Group, said: "Giving local people, businesses and community groups the chance to view and comment on our development proposals is an essential part of Banks'



approach to the development process, and we're pleased to have had a steady flow of visitors to our displays through the week.

"We are now working through the feedback forms that were left with us, and there were a wide range of opinions expressed about the West Clickemin Farm development. We are pleased to see the numbers of people who expressed their support for the project, and especially with the backing given by a number of residents who live close to

the proposed site.

"We have created a high quality development scheme for what we believe is the most appropriate location in the area for residential development, and will continue to work towards finalising our proposals before submitting a planning application to Northumberland County Council."

The proposed development matches the planned location and housing number identified in the revised NCC Ponteland Supplementary Planning Document which is the subject of a six week statutory consultation in November and December (see p7).

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request submitted to NCC by Banks, asking if an EIA would be required as part of the planning application, has sparked objections from Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Civic Society and county councillor Eileen Armstrong.

They are urging planners to insist on an EIA, claiming that great crested newts, bats, red squirrels and badgers have all been recorded on the site, which includes Fairney Burn.

Jessica Holt of the Banks Group with Dr Stewart Blair at the exhibition and an aerial shot of the site.

Your letters

The Editor
Dont News & Views



Mixed views on proposed housing development and anger at new leisure centre charges in this month's letters...

Ponteland under siege from developers

So yet again, Ponteland is under siege from developers.

I think most residents will accept that the village (it isn't a town no matter how often people use that term) does have to expand, but this overkill is just too much.

All of the prospective developers talk about the desperate need for quality housing etc, but it always intrigues me that none of them ever mentions that the main reason is to make a big fat profit.

They don't worry about what happens afterwards because rather like locusts, they will have moved on to the next big pay day elsewhere.

The county council seems unwilling or unable to prevent overdevelopment, with the exception of the Birney Hill site, but since then of course, the Dissington proposals have appeared and look likely to be approved...what a coincidence, or am I being cynical?

As regards the library site - this one seems to have slipped in under the radar - yet more hideous four storey apartments - how original is that?

Why doesn't Northumberland County Council insist on 'proper' houses? I'm also puzzled by the statement 'associated parking'; 32 apartments surely means at least 32 cars? Where on earth is the parking going to be, as the village has huge parking problems to start with?

Finally, why doesn't Northumberland County Council make it a condition of any planning consent that the developers planning the large schemes must provide a relief road/bypass around the village before any development is allowed to take place?

Steve Pattison

Paddock Hill, Ponteland

Development is needed to fund community improvements

We have all seen with Brexit and the American elections that there is a lot of angst and negativity around.

History has shown that you cannot please all of the people all of the time and that a positive attitude to inevitable 'change' is the best way forward.

The same parallel can be drawn with our own development of Ponteland. We all would like to see improvements made to our infrastructure in Ponteland; for example, more parking, Merton Way and Broadway precincts update, traffic issues resolved, schools modernised, updated leisure centre etc. But there appears to be a lot of negativity towards 'change'.

We all recognise that the changes we desire requires money. So where does it come from? We must look at the issue logically.

Northumberland County Council is under increasing pressure to raise monies for initiatives. This has become even more difficult due to austerity, with the Government expecting the public

sector to become more commercially orientated. Each area has to generate revenue to fund local initiatives. But to some 'development' and 'profit' have become very contentious issues.

All commercial developments have to make a profit in order to create employment and growth. We must all realise that without growth our pensions and our lifestyles would diminish. Construction of our own houses and the growth of local businesses (which are so important to us all), have all indirectly created our own pensions.

Therefore, we cannot have no development. We must embrace change, keeping an open mind and compromise to ensure it blends in with our present environment as much as possible. We must remain positive and build bridges otherwise we will only end up with what we are given rather than be able to influence the outcome.

Like Nissan we need to be positive about the future of the North East and not talk negatively and spread doom and gloom. Stagnation is not an option, change is inevitable and 'development' and 'profit' are not dirty words, otherwise Ponteland and our own houses would not exist.

Peter Sutcliffe

Middle Drive, Darras Hall

More car parking spaces needed, not flats

In the November issue Mr Ledger, chairman of the development company Arch, stated that various uses for the library site have been considered.

What is very much needed in the village is more car parking spaces, so in my view this is what the area should be used for.

Mr Ledger claims that there is a general shortage of housing in the Ponteland area, which is not correct. We already have nine sites with flats on them and two more already in the pipeline.

So I do not accept that even more flats are needed on this land at Thornhill Road.

Miss JB Hardy

Ryehaugh, Darras Hall

Thanks to librarians for your service to Ponteland

We have lost our library as we have known it.

More importantly we have lost a team of professional librarians. Over many years I have been impressed by their help and friendliness.

On behalf of many grateful readers I give them my thanks for their service to Ponteland. We shall miss you all.

Nancy Caldwell

Wentworth Court, Ponteland

New leisure centre charges are unfair

The new charges introduced from November 1st across leisure services in Northumberland have been brought in without consultation and with an air of secrecy.

They wrongly assume that one service and pricing structure fits all and it does not!

The new prices unfairly discriminate against those who cannot benefit from the full use of all services offered at the various sites. Those who are elderly or disabled or choose because of personal circumstances to use 'swim only' are penalised by up to a 300% rise in charges. This does vary according to the membership type held prior to November 1st. However, can someone explain how this is "fair"? I believe these changes have been neither been thought through or discussed and consulted on with users.

Members do accept that prices need to increase, but please use some common sense. Active Northumberland needs to offer services that people want, and which they can afford. No one should be expected to pay for services that they will not use. After all, if you are a pensioner or are disabled perhaps you only swim as opposed to using the high tech gym.

Why should these members subsidise the gym?

Lindsay Bailey

Middlebrook, Ponteland

A spokesperson for Active Northumberland told PNV: "The charges, decided by our board after feedback from Active users and staff, were publicised in local media before and since November 1st. Residents were also directed to Active's relaunched website at activenorthumberland.org.uk for full details of revised charges - which in many cases have been cut. There was no 'secrecy'.

"Swim-only users are not being picked on: without having to buy a membership you can use any of our 10 pools for just £2 if on one of several qualifying benefits or if under 18 - extended from the previous youth concession limit of 16 years old. Even full-price adults pay just £4, which compares very favourably to nearby North-East council leisure facilities.

"Some users have for years taken advantage of paying as little as £11 for a whole month of unlimited swimming under unsustainable rates inherited from previous centre operators. Active is not part of Northumberland County Council and has to operate on a commercial basis, so as swimming is the most expensive leisure activity to provide, it is not right that most individuals and families subsidise the pastime of a lucky few. That is why the fees are now 'fair' - the same price, wherever you live and work, based on your ability to pay not on your age.

"Similarly simple pricing also applies to individual use of gyms and activity classes. However for just £32 a month, you can access all 14 leisure centres and more than 400 fitness classes, many of them 7 days a week, on a 12-month deal. No private operators offer such facilities at such a keen price."

January issue deadlines: Delivery of the January issue will start on Tuesday January 3rd and be completed by Monday January 9th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday December 12th. 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 January 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.

Ashamed at behaviour of vandals

This is a community of which we are all proud. Indeed, there are many who work hard in our town, constantly maintaining a high standard of appearance and facilities for all.

There are antisocial incidents which occur too frequently. However, there are times when we are appalled at how badly behaved some people can be.

There was a recent incident, when one of our contractors was power washing the pavement in front of the park. In order to protect the public from a soaking he erected a tape barrier nearby for the short duration.

While he was working there, someone ripped the barrier down, approached the contractor and hurled a mouthful of abuse at him. They all work hard and do so well at keeping our town in good shape in all seasons.

I feel ashamed that any person could behave in such appalling manner to someone going about their lawful business in our town.

The public convenience has been completely refurbished to a high standard. Imagine the disappointment and disgust when it was found that someone had used a basin as a toilet, and scrawled 'Welcome to Ponteland' on the mirror.

Such vandalism would fill any decent minded person with revulsion and it is beyond my comprehension as to how anyone can behave in such a depraved manner. Sadly, this behaviour means that we have to adopt more intrusive surveillance methods.

Councillor Robin Ramsay MBE

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What's on...

Meditation classes in Ponteland

Are you looking for peace of mind? How about trying meditation? Drop-in classes are held on alternate Thursdays at 7.30pm in Merton Hall. They last about one hour. Suggested donation is £4/£5. December dates are the 1st and 15th. Please check meditation-newcastle.org for more info. Everyone is welcome!

Ponteland Rotary Christmas Market

Ponteland Rotary's Christmas Market takes place on Saturday December 3rd at Ponteland High School, running from 11am to 3pm. Attractions include stands and displays with live music, carol singing, food stalls and refreshments, including mulled wine.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

We normally meet on the third Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland. Our next meeting is on Tuesday December 6th when Irene Parker of Hexham will be the demonstrator. The title for this event is 'Christmas Sparkles'. Mince pies and coffee will be served. The cost for the evening is £7 for non-members.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

On Tuesday December 6th at 7.30pm in St Mary's church hall John Richards, retired professor of botany from Newcastle University and President of the Alpine Garden Society, will talk about the alpine flowers of Yunnan. Entrance fee is £2.

Ponteland U3A

Our monthly meeting on Wednesday December 7th is our Christmas Celebration and Faith Tea. 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 Local History Society

On Thursday December 8th we have our Christmas Social. Meetings are held at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. Visitors are welcomed at a special price of £2 per person.

Christmas events at Ponteland Methodist Church

The annual Christmas Fayre is being held at Ponteland Methodist Church on Saturday December 10th from 10am to 12noon. Entrance is free and attractions include entertainment, a tumbola, carols by the U3A choir and stalls selling preserves, cakes and plants. It will be followed by the Christmas concert on Saturday December 17th at 7pm which features The Prudhoe Gleemen. Tickets costing £7 can be reserved by contacting Gaye Templeton on (01661) 825648 or Syd Cowan on (01661) 824459.

Plant Heritage North East Group

Plant Heritage North East Group will be holding its Christmas meeting on Saturday December 10th at 2.30pm in the Memorial Hall. Alistair Chalmers from Branklyn Garden in Scotland will talk about its outstanding collection of plants, particularly rhododendrons, alpines, herbaceous and peat-garden plants and National Collections of Rhododendrons, Cassiope and the striking and unusual vivid blue Himalayan poppy Meconopsis.

Why Christmas?

Three Ponteland churches are asking this question as an invitation to all who want to stop for a moment to focus on the birth of Jesus at the heart of this festival. On Sunday December

11th we plan to show the opening of Luke's Gospel in a 2016 film produced by the Lumo Project, which introduces us to the birth of Jesus in the world of 1st century Palestine. Choose the time that suits you best: 4pm to 5pm cafe-style at the United Reformed Church on Broadway, Darras Hall; 6.30pm to 7.15pm at St Mary's Church; and 6.30pm to 7.30pm at Ponteland Methodist Church.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

At our meeting at 2.30pm on Monday December 12th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, we have Barry Mead and his subject 'Old Whitley Bay'.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday December 12th the Annual General Meeting will be held at our new location of Ponteland Social Club (CIU), Merton Way, Ponteland, NE20 9PX. The doors will open from 7pm for a 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2. Details from the website alpinegarden.net/groups/neegroup@ags.org or email neegroup@agsgroups.org

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday December 13th we are celebrating Christmas with fun activities, carols, mulled wine and mince pies! We are a warm and friendly WI and welcome new members and visitors for a girly night with a difference. We meet on the second Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. For more information please contact us via email at pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or on our Facebook page PontelandVillageWI.

Christmas classics for the hospice

Enjoy a seasonal celebration of Christmas classics accompanied by choir and orchestra. Saturday December 17th at 7.30pm, St Mary's Church, Ponteland. Tickets: £10 available from Glenn Davis on 07907 881707, from Tynedale Hospice Shop, Merton Road, Ponteland, or on the door.

New Year's Day Wheelbarrow Race

The Annual Wheelbarrow Race is being organised by Ponteland 41 Club and Ponteland Rugby Club. We are hoping for a bigger entry than last year with more sponsored barrows. The charities this year will be Tynedale Hospice and St Oswald's Hospice. For more information contact andrew.anderson@which.net

Ponteland Methodist Church

The Bridge is a relaxed church service which welcomes everyone. We meet most Sundays in Ponteland Methodist Church Hall at 4pm for tea, coffee, catch up, music and a short talk with separate activities for children. For more info email: bridge.ponteland@gmail.com or find us on Facebook as The Bridge at Ponteland Methodist Church. Our new Sunday Club is for kids in Reception to Y8. Have fun, make friends, learn about Jesus and the Bible - 4pm Sundays. For more info contact rchudson@btinternet.com

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 Michelle Watson at mwatson@activenorthumberland.org.uk or (01670) 620250.



Darras Hall street to be ‘split in two’ by boundary review

Proposals which would see a street in Darras Hall effectively split in two – with one side having one MP and the opposite side another have been attacked by politicians and local residents alike.

Under the plans put forward by the Boundary Commission, the Ponteland East & Stannington ward would be moved out of the Hexham constituency and into a new Newcastle upon Tyne North West constituency.

A number of other areas would be added to the new Hexham & Morpeth constituency including the Longhorsley and Rothbury wards from the Berwick constituency.

The proposed moves are part of the countrywide review being undertaken by the Boundary Commission designed to help ensure every constituency has roughly the same number of voters, while cutting the total number of MPs in the House of Commons from 650 to 600.

The number of MPs in the North East will be cut from 29 to 25 by the changes, due to be introduced in 2018.

Northumberland County Councillor Eileen Armstrong, who represents the Ponteland East ward, said: “There are significant inconveniences which would result from these changes. The proposed constituency of Hexham & Morpeth would be one of the largest geographically in England.

“East Ponteland, Stannington, and Whalton are primarily rural areas. Whalton, Ogle, and Belsay do not connect to any of the Newcastle

boundary lines and if the Ponteland East & Stannington ward is removed from the Hexham constituency these areas would be represented by a primarily urban, Newcastle based MP.

“Important local ties would be broken by the proposed changes. For example, Ponteland would literally be split; meaning the High School, Middle School, Leisure Centre, Golf Club and some of the town centre would be represented by a different MP to the MP representing most of the residents.

“The dividing line would also mean a Northumberland MP represented one half of Eastern Way and a Newcastle MP the other side!”

Hexham MP Guy Opperman is also against the plans to split the Ponteland constituency. He said: “We believe that the proposals should be modified. The North East Conservative Party has agreed an alternative set of proposals.

“Our proposals, drawn up locally, see the Hexham constituency maintain all of the existing wards (including our ward of Ponteland East & Stannington) and expand to take on some areas of Cramlington. The Berwick upon Tweed constituency would then take on Morpeth.

“The above proposals fit within the Boundary Commission’s requirements on equal voter numbers, and we believe

that they make much more sense from a geographical, cultural, economic and historic perspective, taking into account local ties.”

Kirkley resident Cathy Fish has written to the Boundary Commission to object. She said: “I’m protesting about the lack of detailed local publicity about these important changes. If Councillor Armstrong had not hand delivered information to every house in her ward we would not have been aware about this proposal and the Boundary Commission would have believed there was no opposition.

“They are going to split Ponteland village in half and combine rural areas with a Newcastle MP. It’s totally inappropriate.”

A group of residents from Dunsgreen have written to politicians to express their concern and took part in a group photo as part of their public protest. The Town Council has also written to the Boundary Commission to urge the retention of a single MP for Ponteland. More details about the changes, and how to take part in the public consultation which runs until December 5th, are on the Boundary Commission for England website at bce2018.org.uk

Ponteland East ward councillor Eileen Armstrong on Eastern Way, which would have two MPs under Boundary Committee proposals. Inset – the Dunsgreen protesters.

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Michael Holmes is pictured with daughters Lorraine and Michelle (far right) and pupils from Richard Coates Middle School with the defibrillator. Inset: Pauline Holmes.

Lifesaving defibrillator installed in memory of Ponteland grandmother

The family of a Ponteland grandmother who died suddenly of an aneurism last December has unveiled a defibrillator in her memory at a local school.

Grandmother-of-five Pauline Holmes, 66, who had lived at Kirkley Drive with husband Michael since 1968, worked at Ponteland police headquarters as a domestic supervisor.

Michael, along with daughters Michelle Wilkinson and Lorraine Holmes, decided to donate the £1,020 raised at Pauline's funeral to Hand on Heart to buy the defibrillator for Richard Coates Middle School, which is accompanied by a plaque with wording in her memory.

Twelve children die every week from a cardiac arrest at school and in the past four years Hand on Heart has installed 800 defibrillators in schools and communities, trained 5,300 teachers how to use a defibrillator and given basic life skills to more than 18,000 pupils.

Victoria Burrow, Chief Executive of the Manchester-based charity, said: "By training members of staff and children in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and providing the school with a defibrillator we are giving people in local communities the opportunity to bring chances of survival from 6% to 74% when CPR and a defibrillator is used.

"Schools are so important to everyday life and having a defibrillator on the premises may not just save the lives of the students and staff, but also the parents, volunteers and residents within local communities."

Eight members of staff at the school are being trained on how to use the device and a number of children will also learn skills which one day may help to save a life.

Michelle added: "This has all been done in memory of my mam and the family wanted to fund something which was both for children and also local. We would like to thank all our family and friends for the donations which have funded the defibrillator and Hand on Heart for arranging everything with the purchase, delivery and training to ensure children are safe at school."

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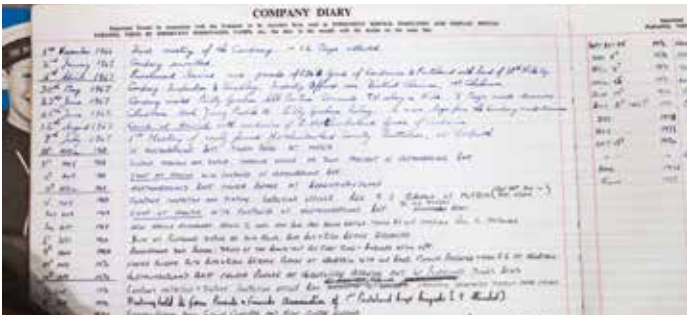
"The standard of care and attention to detail making sure Mum was well cared for and had all she needed was excellent. They took time to get to know Mum, listen to her stories, look at photos with her, learn her likes and dislikes and show an interest in Mum's life experiences.

Joanne L. - August 2016

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Special service and exhibition mark Ponteland Boys' Brigade's 50th anniversary

Ponteland Boys' Brigade celebrated its 50th birthday with an anniversary exhibition and parade service.

The exhibition, which was held at Ponteland Methodist Church, featured old photos, uniforms, badges, music, activities and crafts. Other memorabilia included the original company diary with a hand written record of the very first meetings and services.

The parade service was also at the church, where the 1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade Company has been based since it was formed by founding captain, the late Gordon Bullous, on November 1st 1966.

A special camp is also being planned for next May at the Belfast Battalion Boys' Brigade owned Ganaway Activity Centre at Newtownards in Northern Ireland as part of the celebrations.

The company has been fundraising for the trip, including a collection on the platforms at Central Station in Newcastle, sponsored steps, bag packs, supermarket collections and flag days.

There are vacancies in all of the company's sections for both boys and leaders – find out more at tynesidebb.org/1stponteland or facebook.com/1stpontbb50 or contact Captain Les Dodd at les.dodd1404@gmail.com

Photos from the parade service and exhibition by The Image Farm

www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk

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December 18th, 10am
Carol Praise: Favourite carols
and why

December 25th, 10am
Christmas Day Service
(Children bring a new toy
with you)

January 1st, 10am
A service to start the New Year

Methodist Church, Ponteland

December 4th, 10am
Parade and Carols

December 11th, 4pm
Bridge Special Christmas
Service

December 18th, 6.30pm
Carol Service

December 25th, 10am
Christmas Day service

St. Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

December 18th, 10am
All Age Service
'Christmas is really for
the children?'

December 24th, 3pm
Family Carols

December 24th, 4pm
Family Carols

December 24th, 7pm
Carol Service

December 24th, 11.30pm
Midnight Mass

December 25th, 8am
Holy Communion

December 25th, 10am
Family Communion

Holy Saviour, Milbourne

December 18th, 11.15am
Carol service

December 25th, 11.15am
Holy Communion

Methodist Church, Milbourne

December 18th, 6.30pm
Christmas Carol Service

December 24th, 11.30pm
Communion Service

St Francis Xavier, Cheeseburn

December 21st, 6.30pm
Readings and Carols

December 25th, 9.30am
Christmas Day Mass

St. Matthew's RC Church, Ponteland

December 24th, 4.30pm
Carol Service

December 24th, 5pm
Mass

December 25th, 10.30am
Christmas Day Mass

Carol Singing for Christian Aid at Broadway Shops

**December 17th,
10.30am to 12.30pm**

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The flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to children aged six months to two years at risk of flu, adults aged over 18 at risk of flu, and everyone aged 65 and over.

Pharmacist Jessica Taylor is administering flu vaccines from mid-September until December, with a no appointment walk-in service four days per week.

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GRANTS

The annual grant to the Ponteland Memorial Hall of £6,300, £500 for Ponteland Rotary Club Christmas Market and £250 for Ponteland Beer Festival in 2017 were all approved following successful applications.

PERSONAL SECURITY ALARMS FOR COUNCILLORS/STAFF

It was agreed to purchase some security alarms for councillors and staff for added protection whilst carrying out their duties following a councillor's request.

PONTELAND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – CONSULTATION

The Clerk reported on the level of feedback so far in relation to the above consultation which runs until December 16th. There had been a number of residents who had attended the drop-in event held at Merton Hall on November 5th.

BOUNDARY COMMISSION PROPOSALS

Councillors were informed of the implications of the current consultation being carried out by the Boundary Commission and how this affected Ponteland. The proposals suggested that the Ponteland East with Stannington County Council division would be placed in a new constituency called Newcastle upon Tyne North West. This meant that those residents in the East Ward of the Town Council would have a different MP if the proposals go ahead but continue to receive services from both Northumberland County Council and the Town Council. The Town Council expressed various concerns about the proposals and felt that it was important for the whole of Ponteland to have one MP. It was agreed that a draft letter that had been circulated for approval that included this point would be sent to the Boundary Commission before the deadline of December 5th.

DISSINGTON GARDEN VILLAGE

Councillor Dodd had invited councillors to a meeting with Dissington Estate on November 11th regarding the above proposals. He reiterated that as the county councillor for the North ward he felt it necessary to find out what was being proposed, in case the proposals went ahead, as he wanted to ensure that what was being promised was delivered. This did not mean that he agreed with the proposals. The majority of Town Councillors did not want to attend the meeting.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY SITE

Various Town Councillors had attended a consultation event regarding plans for the above site on October 26th. It was proposed that two blocks of two bedroom flats would be built on the site. Concerns were expressed at the height of the buildings, which were four storey. The Town Council had written to NCC on previous occasions

asking for the library facility to remain on this site. Various residents had suggested that the developers should be asked to provide a library facility in one of the units and the Town Council agreed to write to Arch/Ascent Homes to support that request.

REPLACEMENT OF STREET LIGHTS

The Town Council discussed a complex report relating to the provision of street lights in the conservation area. NCC is ahead of schedule with its programme and had already started work in Ponteland. The Highways Working Party has had discussions with the street lighting manager at NCC regarding the options available in terms of street lights for the conservation area. The Town Council discussed the various options in some detail and eventually agreed to support the provision of lights in the same design as the decorative ones currently adjacent to Coates Green to be extended along Main Street from the Nat West bank to the Diamond and leading up the Blackbird. A contribution is being made by a County Councillor and the remainder of the costs would be met by the Town Council.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed a recommendation made by the Working Party which had met on October 14th to seek permission from NCC to remove the last three bollards at the top of Western Way in view of the ongoing damage. It was agreed that the parking activity would be monitored.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed a recommendation from the Working Party, which had met on October 24th, to withdraw the option to have memorial trees in Ponteland Park due to the lack of suitable space in the area.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported on the recent increase in Leisure Centre fees by Active Northumberland. In some cases there had been a 100% increase for users. The Council expressed concern at the lack of consultation and communication with residents and also about the lack of any information on the website. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to Active Northumberland setting out these concerns. Coun Dodd also referred to recent correspondence from NCC regarding anti social behaviour in the vicinity of the Leisure Centre. He stated that this had been brought up at a recent meeting with the Police. The Town Council had already agreed to discuss the current problems with anti social behaviour at the December meeting.

This column is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on November 9th.

Lizzie takes flower arranging to a whole new level

A Darras Hall teenager is taking flower arranging to a whole new level after she became one of the youngest ever to pass a qualification normally reserved for professional florists.

Lizzie Rutherford recently passed her Level 4 Higher Diploma in Floristry at Askham Bryan College in York aged just 18 and has now been accepted on to the Level 5 Master Diploma of Professional Floristry starting in January.

The former Ponteland High School student has been commuting to York twice per week to complete the part-time course, whilst also gaining work experience at The Flower Cabin in Seaton Delaval with owner Pam Hewitt.

The Level 4 course is a specialist diploma usually taken by professional florists who wish to extend their floristry knowledge, advance their business awareness, pursue a more contemporary approach to floral design, extend their botanical knowledge and learn more about the history of floristry.

Other successes for Lizzie, who hopes to get into event management in London after completing her Level 5 next year, have included silver and bronze awards at the collective college entry at Harrogate Flower Show. She also arranged flowers for a Christmas Fair at Dinnington Church Hall at the end of November.

Lizzie, who lives with parents Diane and Ian in Greenacres, had previously completed her Level 2 and 3 at Tyne Met College, where she met and was initially inspired by the late Gary Payne of 'Designs by Anthony'.

She said: "Although shy, I am very creative and feel that I can successfully express myself through flowers and floral decorative design; their colours, shapes and perfumes are a joy to the senses and I cannot think of a better medium to convey emotions."

Photo by The Image Farm.



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Irene, 87, wins Badminton Club's player of the year award

A grandmother in her late-80s has been named Ponteland Badminton Club's player of the year.

Despite being born in the 1920s and having battled bowel cancer six years ago, Irene Forster is determined to keep herself active.

Colleagues from the 'over-60s' badminton club gathered at the Blackbird Inn to celebrate the award with Irene, who has set the benchmark for playing as long as possible.

Sport-mad Irene had a career with British Telecom before taking early retirement in 1985, but continued to play tennis until 2003 when she was in her mid-70s.

She enjoys watching sport on TV, enjoying the Olympics and rugby as well as her favourites - tennis and badminton.

Her granddaughters keep her on her toes with modern technology, as she uses a mobile phone and texts with great confidence. Irene also enjoys using the self-scanners at Waitrose to complete her weekly shopping!

ENTRIES SOUGHT FOR WHEELBARROW RACE

Entries are being sought for Ponteland's historic New Year's Day Wheelbarrow Race.

Last year's event, which saw three races around the mile long circuit from the Blackbird Inn, raised a record £2,000 for St Oswald's Hospice in Newcastle and national testicular cancer charity Ballboys from entry fees, sponsorship and donations on the day.

Ponteland 41 Club and Ponteland Rugby Club are once again organising the race and the charities this year will be Tynedale Hospice and St Oswald's Hospice. For more information contact andrew.anderson@which.net

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Two weeks left to comment on draft neighbourhood plan

There are just two weeks left to comment on the draft neighbourhood plan prepared by a group of volunteers working on behalf of the Town Council.

Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is now at the final stage of consultation with those who live, work or carry out business in the Neighbourhood Plan area - the civil parish of Ponteland.

A consultation event was held at Merton Hall on November 5th where residents had the opportunity to discuss the plan and the future development of Ponteland with steering group members.

Display materials at the event contained detailed information including a map showing the 33 planning policies covering the built and natural environment, local economy, community wellbeing, housing, transport, and flooding. The pre-submission draft consultation document was also available with all the supporting background papers.

During the past three years a number of non-planning issues have been

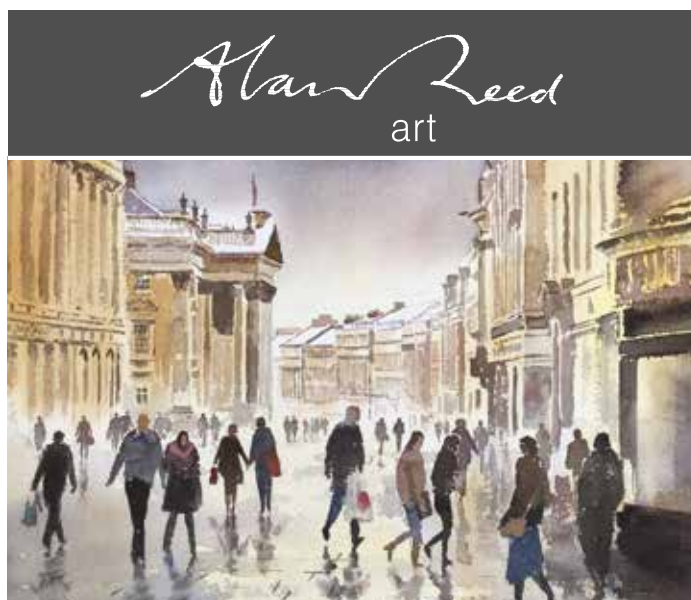
expressed to the volunteer group which, although outside its remit, have been turned into projects or community actions involving other local organisations. These include:

- Conservation Area: to work with Northumberland County Council to review the Ponteland Conservation Area boundary and to develop and adopt a Conservation Character Appraisal and Management Plan for Ponteland and High Callerton.
- Local List of Heritage Assets: to work with NCC and the local community to support the preparation and adoption of a local list of heritage assets of local value.
- Youth Forum: to create a youth forum to promote the needs of the young people in the neighbourhood plan area.

Ponteland Civic Society is working on the Conservation Area and the Local List of Heritage Assets and Ponteland Community Partnership is taking on the creation of a Youth Forum.

Following the consultation, the steering group will review the draft plan and background papers and prepare the neighbourhood plan for submission to Northumberland County Council in spring 2017. For more information visit pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk

This consultation should not be confused with the Northumberland County Council's Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission draft – Proposed Further Major Modifications Consultation – details of which can be found on page 7.



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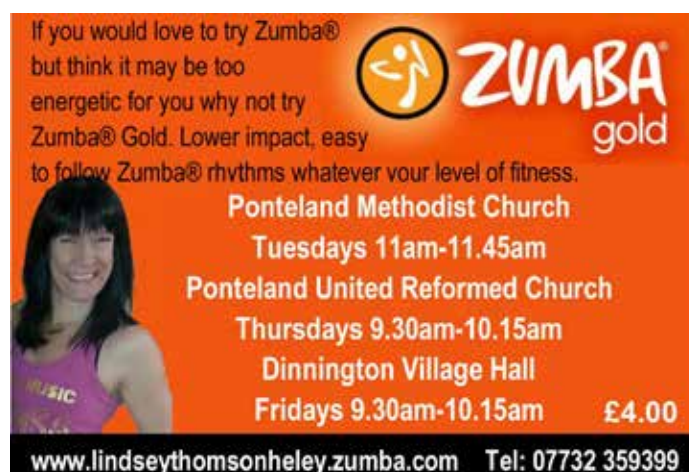
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Helen McArdle Care

New app offers live tracking of bus services

Bus users in Ponteland can track services and check departure times using a new free mobile app offering real-time information.

The new technology means the days of waiting at a bus stop in cold weather when your service is running late are over.

Stagecoach, who run the main bus services in and out of Ponteland, now give access to live information via their new



Stagecoach Bus app – available free of charge for Apple and Android mobile phones.

By clicking on stagecoachbus.com and then 'Plan a journey' it is possible to find times of the next bus on a route and to check whether that particular bus is on time.

If you know the route number of your bus click on 'live bus arrivals' and enter the route number (X78 in the case of Ponteland passengers) and a list of buses running on the Ponteland service appears on screen. The scheduled time of the bus is shown and if it is running late the revised time is shown in green wording.

Ponteland is also served by Go North East, who run the 74 service between Newcastle and Hexham via Matfen and Great Whittington. Their services can be monitored via Google Maps. By zooming in and clicking on your local bus stop icon a list of bus services and times is displayed. By clicking on the Go North East 74 service the bus position can be tracked against the timetable.

All of this information is gathered via the bus ticket machines which use GPS to monitor position and assist drivers in issuing tickets.

Steve Walker, Stagecoach North East managing director, said: "Our new app will make bus travel easier...live bus tracking means you have more time to yourself before leaving for the bus stop.

"What our new app can't do is solve the growing problem of road congestion. We need local authorities to take action because faster and more reliable bus journeys, fewer cars, and less pollution is better for everyone in our communities."

Are you a runner, cyclist or golfer?

Looking for an alternative way to train now that the dark mornings and nights have arrived?

Pilates and Bodhi classes are great for the body, and can enhance the performance of keen runners, cyclists and golfers. Classes to accommodate all abilities are available, as well as personal training sessions, six days a week.



Claim a free introductory movement assessment or taster session* at Precision Fitness by quoting Ponteland News and Views. Simply call 01670 785 759 to enquire.

Find us at Unit 3, Horton Park, Blagdon, Northumberland, NE13 6BU. Call 01670 785 759 to speak to a member of the team and to book your place. www.precisionfitness.org.uk

*One per person to be redeemed before 28 February 2017.





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**Figures using Rightmove Intel market share, as of 29/10/16*



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