

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



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Ponteland's mum's first book

Library move prompts surge
of new members

Rugby club celebrating 50th
anniversary

Plans lodged for 400-home green belt scheme

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Tuneful toddlers sing at cute Christmas concert

Tuneful toddlers sang carols for their proud parents and grandparents in a cute Christmas concert at a packed Ponteland Golf Club.

The 40 children, aged from six months to three years, from Ponteland Private Nursery sang a range of

seasonal songs including Twinkle Twinkle, Away In A Manger, When Santa Got Stuck Up The Chimney and Hush There's A Baby.

The nursery on Bell Villas, which opened in 2009 and is run by owner Deborah Jackson and managers Katie Smith and Claire Dyer, offers high quality childcare and pre-school education.

Photos by the Image Farm.



Register your costly Christmas gifts on free national property database

PC Charlie Cross, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager



The following crimes were reported in November for Ponteland and the surrounding area:

- One dangerous dog offence
- Eight thefts (including two offences of theft from vehicles and theft from a charity shop)
- Eight criminal damage (including damage to the Post Office at Merton Way)
- Two public order
- Four assaults
- One burglary dwelling
- Six burglary other than dwelling (premises with high value tools targeted)
- Two malicious telecommunications (offensive text messages).

Anti-social behaviour

There have been 11 reports of disorder in the Ponteland area. There has been a decline in incidents as a result of a lot of

police patrols and intervention through the schools and other stakeholders.

If you have any information regarding the above or any other incidents, please forward them to:
easttyndale.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk or call us on 101.

Crime prevention

Lots of people receive expensive gifts at Christmas, from phones to computers to bikes. Please take advantage of immobilise.com to record your new items free of charge. The online checking service is used thousands of times per day by police forces to trace the owners of lost or stolen property. Launched in 2003, the Immobilise national property database now has details on 28 million items and you can list anything from toys to tools and mobiles to motor homes. It only takes a few minutes to register.

For further information regarding events, local news, crime prevention advice and our neighbourhood priorities in the East Tyndale area, please visit our website at: northumbria.police.uk

Your Neighbourhood Team can be contacted by email at charles.cross.849@northumbria.pnn.police.uk or by calling 101 ext-69569.



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A visual of how the new garden village could look



Dissington ESTATE

As the New Year commences we have exciting plans for the Estate as our proposals for the Garden Village move to the next stage. This will be complemented by projects that will focus on opening up the Estate for new leisure opportunities to attract local people to visit and experience what the area has to offer.

Dissington Garden Village update

Lugano, owners of the Dissington Estate, have now submitted an outline planning application to Northumberland County Council for permission to build an exceptional new community of the highest design and build quality for up to 2,000 new homes.

This will include a wide range of local improvements including a flood alleviation scheme on the Dissington Estate to protect the town centre and also the long-awaited Ponteland relief road.

Prior to this, we held a number of consultation events in November and have spoken with a large number of tenants, neighbours, businesses and residents and have taken their comments into account when designing the final plan that was submitted in December.

Now that the planning application

has been submitted, we will be opening our Prestwick Park offices for anyone that would like to view the application details each Friday in January, starting on the 6th, from 10am – 2pm. We also hope to hold displays at the Leisure Centre and details of these will be published in the very near future.

We have included the documents on our website at dissingtonestate.co.uk and the application details are also available at the Northumberland County Council offices in Morpeth.

We have also been fortunate to host a visit to the Estate by Sir Terry Farrell, whose practice is leading on the master planning of the Garden Village.

Sir Terry, one of the world's leading architects, has been awarded the Freedom of the City of Newcastle and as part of his visit to receive this honour emphasised his support for the project, stating: "Dissington will be a pioneering example for many communities to follow."

Developing and promoting our leisure activities

On Wednesday January 11th we will be inviting walkers, cyclists, horse riders and other interested parties to our Prestwick Park offices to look at the public footpaths, cycle and bridleways on the Estate to ensure that they are open, accessible and safe to use.

We intend to create signage and illustrations along each route and to further develop and open up new complementary rights of way.

This event is open to anyone and you can drop in anytime between 6pm and 9pm. Further details are available on our website at dissingtonestate.co.uk

Dissington Estate office

E1 Grey, Prestwick Park, Prestwick, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE20 9SJ

www.dissingtonestate.co.uk

Concern about garden village but relief at bypass plan

Residents give views on council planning blueprint

More than 100 residents attended a public drop-in event to give feedback on major changes to Northumberland County Council's Core Strategy.

Modifications to the long-term planning blueprint for the county 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.

The event at the Memorial Hall on December 7th was 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.

A county council spokeswoman said: "The consultation event at Ponteland Memorial Hall was well attended, with around 120 people dropping in and having useful discussions with

council officers on the strategy and policies for Ponteland.

"Dissington Garden Village represented the significant change to the plan at the further major modifications stage. Concerns were raised over the scale of proposed development and its potential impact on services and facilities in Ponteland, including car parking.

"However, the associated delivery of an A696 Ponteland relief road and significant flood alleviation measures were received positively, as was the requirement to deliver an exemplar development.

"There was also interest in the area covered by the Ponteland Supplementary Planning Document that is currently the subject of outline planning applications for residential development to the east of the area and also the proposed secondary and primary schools and leisure centre."

The consultation on the final major modifications to the Core Strategy of Northumberland's Local Plan ended on Friday December 23rd. A submission document will be 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.

Photo from the drop-in event by The Image Farm.



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Library launch photos by Keith Robertson.

Library move prompts surge of new members

The relocation of Ponteland Library into the town's leisure centre has prompted a surge of new members.

Northumberland County Council said the library has welcomed more than 90 new members since moving from nearby Thornhill Road into a new space on the ground floor of the leisure centre.

A further 50 customers have given positive feedback about the use of space, better parking, the availability of books, and the convenience of having library and leisure services together under one roof.

Opening times have increased from 32 to 100 hours a week and the library is also now equipped with a self-service machine for speedier book borrowing. The Archives and Archives Desk have also been relocated with the library to the leisure centre.

The move is part of Northumberland's Sustainable Libraries Programme, which aims to secure the future of libraries across the county, in spite of budget cuts and at a time when council-run libraries are closing in record numbers.

It will also establish a community hub and a

one-stop shop for council services, for greater convenience to local people, and help the county council to make essential savings in the process.

County Council Leader Coun Grant Davey officially reopened the library on November 28th with Active Northumberland's Chief Executive Lorraine Dewison and Coun Val Tyler, Cabinet Member for Arts, Culture, and Leisure.

He said: "Bringing libraries and leisure centres together makes perfect sense both for local people and for the county council, as we look for ways to protect and improve our frontline services.

"Integrating services in this way has...clear benefits such as longer opening hours, improved accessibility and convenience, and better value for money all round. The new library is already a more valuable service. There's a real buzz about the place, with people coming into use the leisure centre and sticking around to read a book afterwards."

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Plans lodged for 400-home development

Scheme to part-fund new school and leisure campus

An outline planning application has been submitted for a 400-home development on green belt land at West Clickemin Farm in Ponteland.

Banks Property has lodged the plans with Northumberland County Council for the 21-hectare site to the west of the A696 at Cheviot View and north of the B6545 Rotary Way.

The Planning Statement which forms part of the planning application documentation makes clear that the development is needed by the county council to enable the new school and leisure campus to go ahead.

It says: "A pivotal argument in favour of this planning application is that this development is needed to deliver a new education and leisure campus for Ponteland.

"The chosen scheme for replacing Ponteland's outdated High School is to provide a combined campus with a new primary school, secondary school and replacement leisure centre on the site of the existing leisure centre which itself is thoroughly outdated.

"This is the most efficient use of the land available but it does necessitate

replacing the leisure centre at the same time as the new school and also rationalising playing pitch provision. The project therefore is bigger and more diverse than one which would normally be funded from a central government source (such as Department for Education). It requires gap funding which the new housing can provide."

The document says there will be 50 two-bedroom properties, 232 three-bed, 86 four-bed and 32 five-bed, with 15% expected to match the 'affordable housing' criterion. The average density will be 18.6 homes per hectare, with approximately 60 dwellings built per year from 2018/19 to 2023/24 and 40 in 2024/25.

The plans were subject of a public exhibition held at the leisure centre in November where members of the project team met members of the public to obtain feedback and answer questions.

Michael Shuttleworth, managing director at Banks Property, said: "The feedback we received from visitors to our recent displays in the town has been very useful, and we were pleased with the numbers who expressed their support for the project, especially from some

of the residents who live close to the proposed site.

"Staying in or moving to the places in which people want to live should be an option for everyone, and increasing the supply of quality homes across our region through developments such as this will contribute to making this a realistic goal.

"We have created a high quality development scheme for what we believe is the most appropriate location in the area for residential development, a view that is backed up by its inclusion in the draft Core Strategy as being appropriate for housing as part of a wider mixed-use development, and we believe the many benefits that it would bring to the local area all add up to a very strong case for its approval by the county council's planning committee."

Following representations from Ponteland Town Council the deadline for comments on the application was extended from December 22nd to Friday January 13th. The planning proposals can be found on the planning portal on the county council website and also at banksgroup.co.uk/west-clickemin-farm.

An illustrative site layout from the outline planning application pack.

Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



More anger at new leisure centre charges in this month's letters...

New swim charges do not compare favourably with Newcastle's

As a regular swimmer at Ponteland pool for 25 years, I feel I have to take issue with the response of the spokesperson for Active Northumberland to a complaint by Lindsay Bailey regarding the new charges.

The new £4 charge does NOT compare favourably with nearby facilities. Yes, both West Denton and Gosforth charge £4.60 for a one off adult swim, but they also offer a discount card for £6.30 or £4.75 for Senior Citizens over 60 which brings down the cost of a swim to £3.50 or £2.10 respectively. The card lasts for one year.

Northumberland's Active Leisure card has been withdrawn and it does not offer concessions to over 60s, some of whom are on very modest pension incomes.

Jesmond Pool also charges £4.60 for an adult swim but offers reductions for senior citizens and has a 'ten swims for the price of nine' scheme.

According to the same spokesperson, swimming is "the pastime of a lucky few". Well I certainly do not feel lucky having to pay £4 for my swim instead of the £2.90 I used to pay before my Active Leisure card was rescinded with nine months still left on it and with a paltry one week leisure pass by way of compensation.

The "few" may be accurate, however, because the number of swimmers has noticeably decreased since the new charges were introduced.

Anne Rayner

Dungreen, Ponteland

'Patronising' response to complaints reflects poor customer service

The response from Active Northumberland to my letter last month demonstrates the very lack of customer service and involvement which is at the heart of discontent among members.

Their perception that swimming is a "pastime" demonstrates a true lack of connection with its members. Many of the swimmers are elderly people, some in their late 80s, who swim to keep fit and maintain their health.

The response was patronising and dismissive of members' views. It will be interesting to see how the loss of memberships caused by these changes affects the leisure services across the county.

Perhaps it is closure by stealth?

Lindsay Bailey

Middlebrook, Ponteland

Time to say Auf Wiedersehen to pavement parking builders

It's about time someone did something about the number of builders who seem to think it's perfectly acceptable to park on the pavement and force pedestrians to use the road to walk past.

Wheelchair users, pushchair users and dog walkers (I'm the latter) should not be running a traffic gauntlet every time they pass a house having an extension!

I've already had one near miss and suspect I'm not the only one. Sort it out Mr Builder, Mr Policeman or Mr Darras Committee before it's 'Auf Wiedersehen' to someone's Pet.

Steve Eglon

Western Way, Darras Hall

Please help the police to help us

You will have read in recent editions of Pont News that our local police are having to deal with disorder issues in Ponteland.

The majority of offences relate to youth disorder, mainly on a Friday and Saturday evening.

If you see any such incidents please email the police neighbourhood team at easttynedale.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk or phone 101.

Carl Rawlings

Mayor, Ponteland Town Council

February issue deadlines: Delivery of the February issue will start on Monday January 30th and be completed by Friday February 3rd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday January 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 February issue.

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



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What's on...

Ponteland U3A

Our monthly meeting on Wednesday January 4th will feature a talk on 'Shepherds Dene' by Jane Easterby. 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.

Darras Hall WI

Darras Hall WI invite you to their meeting on Monday January 9th at 2pm in the URC Cafe, Broadway, Darras Hall. The speaker for January is Geoff Lisle, who will be telling us about Radio Tyneside, the first hospital radio station in the UK. The opening broadcast to the RVI was on October 6th 1951 when a live commentary from St James' Park heard Newcastle Utd beat Wolverhampton Wanderers 2-1. Music and local interest programmes quickly followed, leading to 65 years of fascinating history.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

At our meeting at 2.30pm on Monday January 9th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, we have Mr J Irving and his subject 'Corporate Image/Brand Awareness, mostly in the Railway Industry'.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday January 9th we have Alpine Garden DVDs at 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/neeegroup@ags.org or email neeegroup@agsgroups.org

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday January 10th we welcome Antonia who will talk to us about 'Nutritional Tips, Health Kinesiology and Essential Oils for Life Balance'. 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 pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or on our Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

'Sir William Armstrong - Magician of the North' is the title of the talk that will be given by Anthony Atkinson JP, MA (Cantabrigians) ACA at Kirkley Hall at 2pm on Wednesday January 11th. The talk looks at the multi-faceted Victorian giant that attracted fierce controversy.

Should he be seen as a national hero or merchant of death - a philanthropist or uncaring employer? The cost is £5 for non-members. To book a place email fokh@gmail.com or ring 07551 974955. For information about future talks see friendsofkirkleyhall.org

Plant Heritage

North East Group

The Plant Heritage North East Group AGM will be held at the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Saturday January 14th, followed by a presentation on 'Gems of British Gardens' by Bill Devonshire. Just the right atmosphere to help to forget the winter. All are welcome.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Ponteland Floral Art Club is hosting a members only evening on Tuesday January 17th in the Memorial Hall. There will be a festive buffet provided by the committee. In addition, very talented members will be offering small workshops so that attendees can learn and enjoy new techniques. All members are welcome to attend, and the meeting starts at 7pm.

Ponteland Local History Society

On Thursday January 19th our subject and speaker are 'Visitors to Northumberland 1500-1850' by Tim Richards. 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.

Embroiderers' Guild

Ponteland Branch

On Monday January 23rd at 2pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Donna Cheshire (Newcastle) will talk about her life as a textile artist and show samples of her work. For further information email ponteland.eg@btinternet.com or call (01661) 881395.

Beading group

Are you looking for a new hobby or want to improve on your skills? Why not join our beading group? This friendly group welcomes beginners as well as intermediate beaders. Therefore we will work with two programmes according to your previous experience. We meet at Merton Hall on Tuesdays from 7pm to 9pm. For further information or to book a place contact Marijke Shrivastava at mshrivastava@blueyonder.co.uk or on 0191 284 7266. Booking is essential.

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.

Ponteland Village Bridge Club

Would you like a friendly game of bridge? Ponteland Village Bridge Club meets every Friday evening in Merton Hall; play starts at 7pm. We play 20 boards of relaxed duplicate bridge. If you don't have a partner you can still come along - call Chairman Pete Ford on 07739 208308 and he will fix you up with a partner.

Ponteland Photographic Society

The Society meets every Monday at 7.30pm in the large room at Merton Hall. Speakers and workshops end just after 9pm and we then break for coffee/tea and informal discussion, so there is plenty of time for problem solving and an exchange of news and ideas. Everyone is welcome. See pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk

Rotary Club of Ponteland

Rotary Club of Ponteland meet every Tuesday at Ponteland Golf Club. The meetings alternate between lunch times (1st and 3rd Tuesdays) and evenings (2nd and 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.



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Joanne L. - August 2016 ”

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Katie finds menu for success

Budding chef Katie Lough found the menu for success as she won through to the North-East finals of a national culinary competition.

The 12-year-old Richard Coates CE Middle School pupil served a delicious menu of stuffed chicken with mashed potato and honey glazed carrots, and pears with hot chocolate sauce to impress judges of FutureChef 2017.

Having beat three other young chefs at the earlier heat held at Gateshead College, Katie will now compete in the North East final on February 7th for a place in the national final being held at Westminster Kingsway College in London in March.

FutureChef is a nationwide culinary initiative run by The Springboard Charity, helping young people aged 12 to 16 to learn to cook, explore food and develop a vital life skill. It develops culinary skills, educates about food provenance, health & safety and food hygiene and informs

about entry routes to worthwhile careers in hospitality.

The initiative, which encourages the next generation of young chefs, directly relates to the national curriculum and aims to tackle the severe skills shortage facing hospitality. FutureChef features a four stage national competition, annually involving over 8,000 participants.

Head Judge David Bittlestone from Chartwells, Compass said: "The standard was so high today and it was a close competition, Katie showed a calm and confident professionalism throughout, with a good balance of menu and flavours."

Katie said: "I'm so surprised to have won. I'm so excited for the regional final."



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BBC broadcaster launches Ponteland's mum's first book

BBC Health Editor Hugh Pym was guest of honour at the official launch of a Ponteland mother-of-two's first book.

Sarah Reay has spent four years writing 'The Half-Shilling Curate' about her grandfather Reverend Herbert Butler Cowl, an Army Chaplain who went to France with the Durham Light Infantry and the Northumberland Fusiliers in 1915.

He was severely wounded during heavy enemy bombardment at the front. On his journey back to England he was placed in a cot bed aboard the hospital ship Anglia when she hit a German mine in the Channel. As a result of Herbert's actions that day, he became one of the first Wesleyan Army Chaplains to receive the Military Cross for exemplary gallantry.

The book, drawn from his own descriptive account in personal letters and writings, was launched at the Lit and Phil in Newcastle.

Sarah's friend, local pianist Deanna Bolton, composed a piece of hymnal music entitled 'The Half-Shilling Curate', which she debuted at the event, while Sarah read aloud a few of her favourite passages from the book.



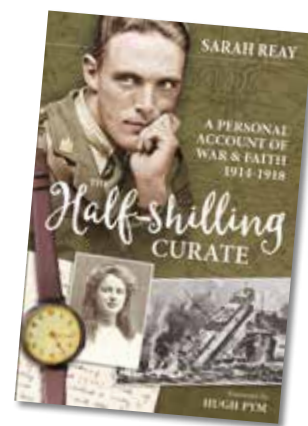
She said: "Hugh's grandfather was also a Great War Army Chaplain, and he generously wrote the foreword to my book. Hugh introduced the evening – during which I shared my memories of my grandfather, the background to my four-year project in researching and

writing his story, and my joy that everyone can now share the life and times of an incredible man who had served his king, country and God 100 years ago."

Friends and family members, who had travelled from as far as British Columbia, were greeted by live piano music from the Great War period, with champagne and canapes being served in the open library.

Guests included three of The Rev. Cowl's great-grandchildren, along with one of his great-nieces. There was representation from the Durham Light Infantry Association from retired Major Chris Lawton MBE DL.

Signed books can be ordered through the website halfshillingcurate.com with free delivery in the Ponteland area, or can be purchased at Belsay shop.



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Festive treat as Rep prepares for 90th birthday celebration

By Lesley Eltringham

Amateur theatregoers enjoyed a festive treat when they came to see Ponteland Rep's latest pantomime, Aladdin.

This was a new script from Simon Sladen and was full of fun and entertainment. Young members of the society who played the role of Princess Lotus Blossom were Amber Covington and Juliette Taylor, sharing the performances. They showed real courage and effort as they sang their hearts out for the audience.

Matthew Nicholson, as Aladdin, was brilliant singing 'A whole new world' with his princesses. Our evil Abanazar was outstandingly played by Jonny Woollett and he was scarily convincing as well as entertaining the audience with a lot of banter.

Father and son Jason and Matthew Long played mother and son Dame Widow Twankey and Wishee Washee. A confusing and hilarious combination!

From the Genie to the Emperor, from the Handmaidens to the Preppies (the Ponteland Rep Youth Theatre), everyone gave their all on stage and were well applauded by the wonderful audience, as have those supporting Ponteland Repertory Society for 90 years next year.

So, in the spring, The Rep will be marking this amazing 90 years and we'd love as many people to help us celebrate. If you've been a member in the past we would welcome you back to join us for this special show, and if you'd like to join us for the first time, we'd love to have you too.

Our production will take us around the world and we'll be including music from some of the wonderful shows the society has performed over the years.

If you are interested please contact our director Carole Davies at caroledavies9@gmail.com



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ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN PONTELAND

The Council discussed two meetings that had recently been held, one with the police and a multi agency meeting to discuss the ongoing problems with anti-social behaviour in Ponteland. Various issues surrounding additional CCTV and funding of more youth work activities were discussed. It was agreed that the Town Council would continue to be represented at the multi agency meetings and that further consideration would be given to the funding of CCTV and youth work during the budget process. It was also agreed to include a letter in Pont News (see p10).

NORTH EAST WAR MEMORIALS PROJECT

The Mayor and Coun Robin Ramsay attended an event on November 23rd organised by Civic Voice, who work in partnership with Historic England, the War Memorial Trust and the North East War Memorials Project (NEWMP). The event dealt with the issue of war memorials and how the NEWMP were seeking volunteers for a project that aims to find memorials, survey their condition, enter the survey details online and decide if a grant application should be made for repairs. The project involves parish and town councils liaising with Historic England and possibly with the county council's conservation officer. The War Memorials Grants Scheme ends in 2018 and applications should be made in 2017. Ponteland has seven memorials registered online; three in the Memorial Hall, three in St Mary's Church and one at the former Northumbria Police HQ. The Town Council agreed to support the aims of the NEWMP and to survey the condition of the Ponteland War Memorials. If the surveys showed that work was required then a report would be prepared and the Town Council would decide if a grant application should be submitted.

GRANTS

The Town Council approved the annual grant to the Dalton Village Hall of £1,500 and a grant to the Great North Air Ambulance of £250.

PONT CHARITY GROUP

Town Councillors were informed that Pont Charity Group had recently held its last meeting. The Council wished to thank members of the group for their fundraising efforts, which led to nearly £28,000 being raised for local charities. Bruce Grant, the Secretary of the Group, had also raised nearly £23,000 for good causes. The Town Council has written to Mr Grant, thanking him for all of his hard work over the past few years.

NCC CORE STRATEGY FURTHER MAJOR MODIFICATIONS DOCUMENT AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR PONTELAND

The Council approved its response to the above two documents and agreed that these should be sent off to NCC in order to meet the December 23rd deadline. Copies of the Town Council's responses are available on the website at ponteland-tc.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on November 21st and the Council agreed several recommendations. The installation of a further

bin in the park at the top of the steps leading to the Memorial Hall Car Park was agreed in response to a petition organised by a park user. The installation of nameplates to eight notable trees in the park similar to one attached to the Hornbeam tree earlier this year was also agreed. The Town Council also approved the appointment of consultants to liaise with the Environment Agency in relation to the bank erosion that had occurred during the flooding in January.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Coun Dodd mentioned a scheme for the car park at the back of Merton Way for which he had some funding but would be looking for additional funds to progress the proposal. He agreed to send the information to Councillors for their views. Coun Dodd also referred to meetings with Dissington Estate regarding the Garden Village proposal, where drainage and the proposed relief road was discussed. He said he and the Planning Services Manager at NCC would be meeting with residents of the Eland Estate to discuss the proposed route of the relief road in more detail. Coun Dodd spoke on a recent fatal accident on the A696 and said he felt action was required to improve the safety of the stretch of road between Ponteland and Belsay. He also highlighted a recent meeting of the Leisure Centre Users Group and informed the Council that representatives of Active Northumberland would be attending the area meetings in January.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on December 14th.

Youth Service works with Town Council on youth projects

Northumberland Youth Service and Ponteland Town Council are working together on projects to deliver opportunities for young people.

Junior Youth Club

Youth workers have been working with Richard Coates Middle School staff and students to launch a youth club, which runs directly after school on a Monday and is open to all Year 7 and Year 8 students at RCMS.

Level 1 Youth Work Course

PTC is funding a free after-school Level 1 Youth Work Course for sixth form students delivered by NYS. It will run for eight weeks starting in January and is ideal for young people who volunteer in uniformed groups, sports clubs or youth clubs or are interested in a career in teaching, youth work or social work.

£100 Challenge

Groups of Year 9 students have been set an entrepreneurial challenge by the Town Council, with each given £100 and charged with using it creatively to make a profit. The youth workers supporting them are predicting healthy profits which the groups will use to fund resources or activities for their youth clubs.

For more information on any of the above please contact Sharon Stirling at sharon.stirling@northumberland.gov.uk or on 01670 597892.



Jess and Sophie win Peace Poster competition

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

The theme was 'A Celebration of Peace' and Jess Slater, 12, was the winner from Ponteland Community Middle School with her striking montage of world locations and images. Sophie Hyman, 13, from Richard Coates Middle School won with her portrayal of images around a picture of a lion, inspired by

the organisers of the contest.

Art teachers Vicki Salter and Jo Baker attended presentations at the school's assemblies where prizes were presented to the top four from each school by Ponteland Lions President Frank Harrington.

The local winning posters were entered into the

Northern District Area (which includes Scotland) and Jess's poster won that round and now goes on to be entered into the national stage of the competition. Pictures of all the entries are displayed at the schools.

Above: Jess Slater with Ponteland Lions President Frank Harrington and her winning picture. Top left: Sophie Hyman's winning picture.

Volunteers sought for bridleway project

Volunteers are being sought to assist a project revitalising the bridleway between the village centre and Rotary Way.

A clear-up exercise is being held on Saturday February 25th in preparation for the laying of new grit along the well-used community route. Other plans include new signage at either end.

Organisations involved in the project include Northumberland County Council (Area Countryside Officer), Ponteland Wildlife Group, the Town Council and youth groups.

Anyone wishing to take part can contact Ponteland Community Partnership through the website pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk and leave their details on the contact page. You will then be sent information about the day.

Tank yu Lydia!

A young artist has raised more than £400 for Children in Need after selling copies of a cartoon picture she drew.

Lydia Lamplugh, nine, a pupil at Darras Hall First School, asked her grandad if he could photocopy her drawing of a Minion so she could sell prints.

Aunts, uncles, friends and anyone else who visited the family home bought prints, raising over £200. This

was then matched by her grandad's employer, raising a total of £410 for the BBC charity.

Well done Lydia!





Nobel Prize winning physicist inspires Ponteland student

A Ponteland student met a pioneering physicist whose ground-breaking research was rewarded with a Nobel Prize.

The world renowned Professor Peter Higgs, who predicted the existence of a fundamental particle in 1964 nearly 50 years before it was actually confirmed, held a masterclass at the Centre for the Life in Newcastle.

Ponteland High School Year 13 student Isabelle (Izzy) Riley was among the lucky young physicists invited to attend to hear Prof Higgs, now 87, talk and answer questions.

The Higgs boson, the so-called 'God particle' named after the multi award-winning scientist, provides mass to the most basic

building blocks of matter. Without it, the Standard Model theory that combines all the fundamental forces and particles of the universe would have fallen down.

Izzy said: "Professor Higgs has had an award-winning career, with his work on subatomic particles leading to the discovery of the Higgs Boson at CERN (The Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire in Geneva) in July 2012.

"Despite being a Nobel Prize holder and a world famous scientist, Peter came across as humble and personable. His career in physics culminating in the discovery of the Higgs boson was inspiring to hear and gave a real insight into the everyday life of a research physicist; a career I wish to pursue."

Izzy is pictured in the pink shirt to the left of Peter Higgs.

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Rugby club marks 50th anniversary

By Ron Clarke

This New Year marks a remarkable milestone for Ponteland Rugby Club as it celebrates five decades since it was founded in 1967.

The 50th anniversary celebrations will include a Player's Dinner for all those who have represented the club through the years, the planned publication of a glossy souvenir book and the return of the highly successful Ponteland Beer Festival for a fourth year.

Former England international Roger Uttley, who famously played in a third team fixture before being snapped up by Gosforth and going on to represent his country, said: "At a time when there are many social changes taking place in society, the role of a rugby club in its local community should be recognised for the important role it plays in providing the social cement to

bind people together.

"It gives a purpose and opportunity for people to get together for the common good. I wish the current custodians of the club and its members heartiest congratulations on what has been achieved in the first 50 years and best wishes for the next 50."

The first fixture saw the club narrowly lose 8-11 to Winlaton Vulcans in a first season where they won 11 out of the 19 games played. Records also show that the club made the princely pre-decimal surplus of 9s 1d - around 45p in new money!

The club has gone from strength to strength since



the early days and continues to play a pivotal role in the community. Success on the field has seen the club lift the Northumberland Shield, having several players represent the county and most recently former player Callum Chick moving to Newcastle Falcons. He captained the England U18s and was in the England U20 team which won the 2016 World Junior Championship.

Off the field there have been many high profile events such

as the annual Ponteland Golf Classic, held at Seahouses for the past 28 years, and the hugely popular Beer Festival.

This year it is scheduled for April 21 - 23 with more than 100 real ales, 25 ciders, wine, Prosecco and other drinks available as well as food and live music.

More details about the Beer Festival and pre-ordering tickets are available at pontelandbeerfestival.co.uk

The Ponteland Colts team from the 1968-69 season.



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Students donate Christmas hampers to Syrian refugees

Generous Ponteland High School students filled a classroom with Christmas hampers for Syrian refugees and a regional children's charity.

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

Hampers were collected by colleagues from Northumberland County Council and Newcastle City Council to be shared with Syrian families in the Northumberland and Newcastle area.

Hampers were also donated to Metro Radio's Cash for Kids appeal, which raises hundreds of thousands of pounds for local children and young people suffering abuse or neglect, who are disabled and have special needs, or who simply need extra care and guidance.



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