

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



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Darras Hall given green light

Full list of county and town
council election candidates

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Full houses for Ponteland Rep's 90th birthday shows

By Lesley Eltringham

Ponteland Rep celebrated its 90th anniversary with three nights of full houses enjoying a wide programme of music and comedy covering its nine decades.

It included 'My Fair Lady', 'Oklahoma', 'South Pacific' and a touch of Gilbert and Sullivan, to mention but a few.

Pianist Kyle Richardson gave us a superb rendition of 'Some Enchanted Evening' while our Youth Theatre Preppies led by Lucy Walton gave us songs from Annie and the Sound of Music.

Our President Betty Nesbit is also having her 90th birthday in May, so we had an extra reason for celebrations! Our next show, in the Autumn, is 'The King and I'. We look forward to welcoming our loyal and appreciative audiences back then.

Photo by Trevor Covington.



Dissington Garden Village wins national support

Northumberland County Council has been awarded a grant of £75,000 from the Homes and Communities Agency to support the development of the Dissington Garden Village project.

The scheme, which was approved in principle during March by the Council's Strategic Planning Committee, has been allocated the grant from the HCA's Capacity Fund to assist with the design thinking and delivery strategy for the new community proposed on the Dissington Estate, just north of Ponteland.

In making the award, the HCA highlighted that there

was much interest in the success of the programme in delivering Garden Villages that are great places to live.

In addition, the HCA has offered the council further technical and 'critical friend' support as well as an invitation to join the national Garden Villages Forum to share good practice in taking forward successful Garden Villages.

In accepting the support,

Steven Mason, chief executive of Northumberland County Council said: "We are delighted that this exceptional project has been recognised nationally and for the funds that will enable us to take forward the project to ensure the many benefits it will bring are delivered.

"Northumberland is committed to securing jobs, growth and new homes and the Garden Village proposed at Dissington will not only support these aims but will also be to the highest design quality standards.

"The allocation of these funds is a clear vote of confidence in our shared ambitions to make Dissington Garden Village a great place and a flagship project for the North East."

The project is being developed in partnership with North-East based property company Lugano Developments, owners of the Dissington Estate.

Company Chairman Richard Robson added: "This is a very positive step forward for the project and we are thrilled that the scheme has been recognised nationally as worthy of support.

"It is an excellent example of a public/private sector partnership that will result in a new village community that Northumberland can be proud of and which delivers not only an exceptional place to live, but very significant

infrastructure improvements that will benefit the wider area.

"We will continue to work closely with the Council and our key partners, including the Prince's Foundation, to bring the scheme to successful fruition."

Following the Strategic Planning Committee decision in March where it was agreed that the Council was 'minded to approve' the Dissington Garden Village proposal, the outline planning application is being referred to the Secretary of State for a decision on whether he wishes to call-in the application for his own determination.

More public support for scheme

Since the county council gave its approval for the garden village scheme in March, more letters of support have been recorded.

The main report to the strategic planning committee which met on March 15th recorded 394 objections and 52 letters of support, as reported in the April issue of Pont News. Not all responses had been uploaded to the council's planning portal due to the volume of correspondence received.

Latest figures show there have been 612 objections and 410 letters of support received.

Image: A visual of the garden village

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*'we recognised
the potential
to create
something
positive... at
Dissington...'*

***The Prince's
Foundation***
(letter of support)



It is time to reflect on the progress made, and to look to the future

From the outset we have been fully committed to creating something truly exceptional, something that would set the development apart from other housing schemes and something that would act as a catalyst for a real economic shift that would benefit both local and regional economies.

We are hugely grateful to all those individuals and organisations who sent in letters of support and who understood the level of ambition of the project, but more importantly the very significant improvements to local infrastructure it will deliver.

We were fortunate to secure the support of the North East LEP and the North East Chamber of Commerce, whilst our drive to use innovation in the design of the new homes secured positive responses from both The Prince's Foundation and

from Lord Matthew Taylor - we would also like to thank the 400+ individuals and organisations who have taken the time to view and comment on our plans; we read every letter and can guarantee that we will work hard to deliver an exemplar development that we will all be proud of.

We are also grateful for the comments made by people who are sceptical or who oppose our plans - we have spent a lot of time looking at your letters and their content and we will make every effort to alleviate or dispel many of the concerns as we look to proceed to the next stage of the process to deliver the Garden Village. We will share progress, consult openly and will open our Estate Office for people to view our evolving plans not only for the garden village but for the Dissington Estate as a whole.

We will endeavour to

*'we have been very pleased to involve
ourselves with the development of this...
new Garden Village at Dissington'*

***The North East Local
Enterprise Partnership*** (letter of support)

continue to design a development in harmony with its surroundings and which compliments surrounding communities and will listen to residents where they think that further effort can be made or an alternative solution can be offered.

So now the work continues - we have already begun to connect with local organisations and businesses who would like to be involved with the new village, we have met with a number of aspiring new business start-ups who would like to locate within it and

we have a growing list of potential new residents who have expressed an interest in owning one of the new homes.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who has shown an interest in Dissington Garden Village and for your support and input so far, we are looking forward to the next stage in bringing the Garden Village to reality.



For more information email info@dissingtonestate.co.uk or visit dissingtonestate.co.uk



The benefits of Neighbourhood Watch schemes

By PC 8950 Dean Rowell, Ponteland Neighbourhood Beat Manager



The following 28 crimes were reported for the period of March 10th to April 9th for Ponteland and the surrounding area:

- three burglary dwellings
- two burglaries other than dwelling
- seven thefts (including one theft of motor vehicle during left running with keys in early morning)
- five shopliftings
- four criminal damages (including three where items have been thrown at passing cars)
- two public order
- five assaults.

Anti-social behaviour

There have been 11 reports of anti-social behaviour in the Ponteland area between March 10th and April 9th. Northumbria Police has taken positive action in all incidents where offenders have been identified, and alcohol seizures have been made. We continue to conduct highly visible patrols in these areas and the mounted section has returned to Ponteland this month for engagement with the public.

Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch is all about looking out for each other.

A national Neighbourhood Watch Association exists, and is extremely active in many parts of the country, and

throughout the Northumbria Police area.

Neighbours acting together mean that dozens of eyes and ears are ready to pick up on anything happening in the neighbourhood that could cause worry or concern.

It's not about being nosy or interfering, it's about being a good neighbour and caring for your community.

There is more to Neighbourhood Watch than protecting homes and property against burglary. By working together, neighbours can help reduce all sorts of crimes. They can also improve the environment by getting something done about issues like vandalism, graffiti, poor lighting and local amenities.

Neighbourhood Watch is also about bringing people closer together and involving them in local life. A stronger community spirit grows as people get to know each other and look out for one another.

Anyone can join a Neighbourhood Watch team and everyone can play a part in its achievements.

Neighbourhood Watch works by:

- Bringing people closer together
- Building a stronger community spirit
- Helping to reduce crime
- Lessening people's anxieties about crime
- Strengthening links with the police
- Developing closer relationships with local councils

- Improving the local environment
- Creating a better quality of life.

Individual Neighbourhood Watch schemes can range from a few houses in a cul-de-sac, to an entire housing estate. If a scheme doesn't exist where you live, consider approaching a few neighbours to gauge their interest.

In many areas, Police Neighbourhood Beat Managers work actively with Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Police Crime Prevention Advisors will also provide you with advice and guidance on security over and above that which you may find on this site.

For further information contact your local Neighbourhood Policing Team on 101 ext. 69191.

Police surgeries

Local police surgeries will take place on the following dates:

Saturday May 13th – 10am to 11am
Merton Hall, Ponteland with CSO Paul Cotterill

Saturday May 13th – 11am to 12noon
Co-op, Broadway, Ponteland with CSO Paul Cotterill.

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.

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

Party in the Park

This year's Party in the Park is being held on Sunday June 11th from 1.30pm.

The admission charge will be £1 (children under five free). Entertainment includes: Ponteland Community Band; the Jill Errington Dancing Group; Darras Hall First School Choir; The Rock Choir; a fun fair; target paint ball; climbing wall; Punch & Judy and pony rides.

The event is as usual organised by the Christian Churches together in Ponteland, St. Mary's, St. Mathew's Catholic Church, Ponteland Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

The objective of the event is to create a social gathering for the families and children of Ponteland and to support local charities.



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Plans lodged for 62-home development in Medburn

A planning application has been lodged for a luxury 62-home development in Medburn.

Seaton Burn-based developer Bellway Homes wants to build the four and five bedroom detached houses, with 193 parking spaces, on land east of The Nursery, Medburn.

The 15.8-acre site is described in the planning application supporting documentation as 'currently overgrown with no particular use'. Access is from The Nursery.

It continues: "Four feature plots are located in corner positions in the development, adding visual interest to the street scene. The site entrance abuts the public road on The Nursery, where a new footpath will be constructed allowing pedestrian access to the site.

"The layout submitted at the heart of this application is for 62 dwellings comprising of two and two-and-a-half storey buildings of four and five bedroom homes. Each dwelling also

benefits from its own parking space with a minimum of two vehicles for each property."

The development is described as being of low density at around ten units per hectare, and the height of the properties is 5m for the eaves and 8.5m for the ridge for the two-storey properties and 5.6m for the eaves and 9.5m for the ridge for the two-and-a-half storey units.

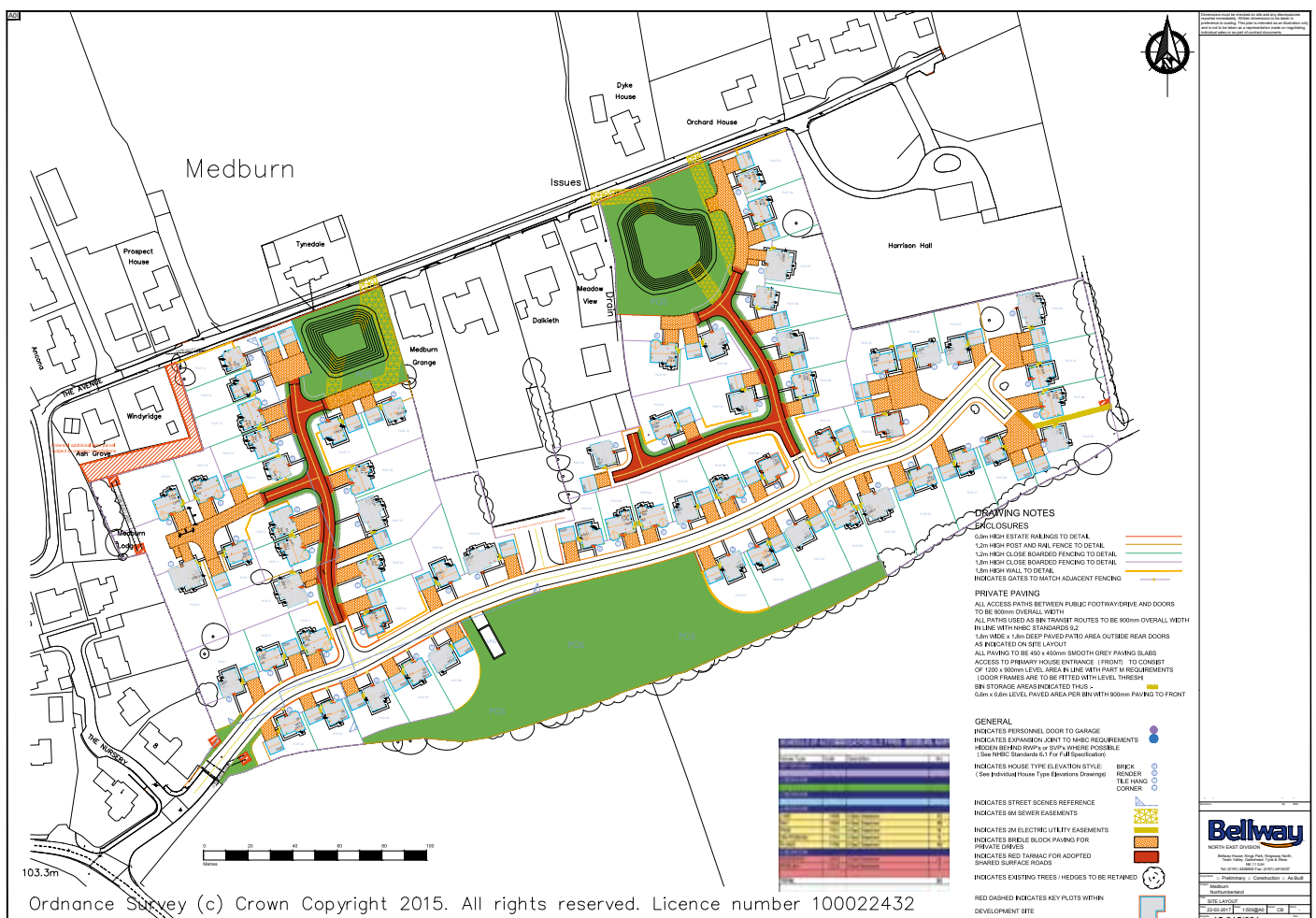
The application adds that "... each dwelling (has) substantial private garden space, at both the front and rear of the properties, creating an attractive frontage and desirable development."

The site map here shops the new development would sit behind existing properties including Medburn Lodge, Ash Grove, Windyridge, Medburn Grange, Dalkeith, Meadow View and the Harrison Hall site.

An objector who lives at The Nursery expressed concerns on the Northumberland County Council planning portal about the increased traffic. He wrote: "The entrance to The Nursery is already on a sharp bend. An influx of cars entering and leaving The Nursery will only end in one way... an accident!"

He added: "I wonder what the council will do in the winter when the road is covered in snow and ice. Cars and even the school buses struggle to get up the hill and even skid off into the fields because the road is not gritted or cleared of snow. I'm guessing the council will have to find the money from their already squeezed budget to grit the roads."

To view the planning application, visit the Northumberland County Council planning portal at northumberland.gov.uk and quote ref 17/01149/FUL.





New primary school for Darras Hall gets green light

Apartments scheme for former library site also approved

Darras Hall is to get a new primary school to replace the current first school after plans were approved by Northumberland County Council.

But controversial proposals for a floodlit 3G pitch within the new school site have been withdrawn following local objections.

The existing school buildings on the western side of the site neighbouring Broadway and Middle Drive which date back to the 1960s will be demolished and the new 1,900 sq m primary school built on the eastern side adjoining Middle Drive. This will enable the school to continue to operate during the building works.

The planning application said the new school will be of contemporary design and two storeys in height reducing to single storey towards the eastern boundary.

The proposals include the provision of classrooms and ancillary facilities such as a main hall, offices, staff room, studios, kitchen, toilets and outside classroom and playing spaces. A temporary single storey mobile classroom will also be built and located adjacent to the church.

The main car park for staff will be located on Middle Drive and a car park for parent drop off/pick up is planned off Broadway. Two enclosed multi use games areas are proposed. The land to the rear of the school would be laid out for three grass playing pitches.

Plans for 27 apartments to be built on the site of the former Ponteland library have also been approved by the county

council's planning committee, subject to a Section 106 legal agreement.

Residential developer Ascent Homes, the house building arm of the Northumberland County Council-owned development company Arch, had reduced the number of homes from 34 originally proposed and also the height of the two apartment blocks by nearly two metres from four storey to three storey.

The changes followed feedback from a public exhibition held last October to outline its plans for the site on Thornhill Road, which more than 100 residents attended.

A visual of the proposed residential development on the former library site.

Online petition demands Government intervention on housing, education and leisure schemes

Campaigners calling for Government intervention on contentious plans for 2,400 new homes and a £57m education and leisure scheme have secured nearly 1,000 names on an online petition.

A demonstration was held on Coates Green on April 22nd where protesters against the planned 2,000 homes at Dissington Garden Village, 400 homes at West Clickemin Farm and a new leisure centre and primary and secondary school in the village gathered.

Members of Northumberland County Council's strategic planning committee said they were minded to approve the developments in March, despite more than 1,750 objections.

All three applications are now being referred to the National Planning Casework Unit, which will confirm in each case if the county council can take the final decision or if the Secretary of State wishes to 'call it in' and make a ruling.

The Ponteland Green Belt Group is trying to persuade the Government to intervene, and has launched a petition demanding all recent major planning decisions made by NCC should be called in by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The group's chairman Tony Noble said: "We want the Secretary of State to call in all the controversial plans because they were approved despite significant objections."

The petition, which had 966 signatories as we went to print, can be found by searching for Ponteland Green Belt Group on change.org

Candidates for town and county council elections named

Elections for town and county councillors for Ponteland's four wards are being held on Thursday May 4th.

There are four seats up for grabs in the Northumberland County Council election and 12 seats available in the Ponteland Town council election.

In the town council elections, eight Conservative Party candidates for the Ponteland East, Ponteland South with Heddton, and Ponteland West wards will be elected unopposed, with one vacancy.

In the Ponteland North ward, the Labour Party's Simon Railton is the only non Conservative Party candidate for the Town Council. He stands against Conservative Party candidates Lyle Darwin, Richard Dodd and Christine Greenwell.

There are 12 candidates seeking election to the county council.

The Conservative Party and Labour Party are fielding candidates in all four wards, with the Liberal Democrats fighting for election in Ponteland North, Ponteland East and Ponteland South with Heddon wards but not Ponteland West. The Green Party is contesting Ponteland North only.

The full list of candidates for the Northumberland County

Council election is as follows:

Ponteland East with Stannington

- Eileen Armstrong, Hillcrest, Prestwick, Ponteland - The Conservative Party
- Paul Lawrence, Station Rd, Stannington - Green Party
- Chris Matthew, Ridgely Drive, Ponteland - Liberal Democrats
- Tony Reid, Beech Grove, South Prudhoe - Labour Party

Ponteland North

- Richard Dodd, Ogle Hill Head, Belsay - The Conservative Party
- Philip Pennington, Thornhill Road, Ponteland - Liberal Democrats
- Simon Railton, Simonside View, Ponteland – Labour Party

Ponteland South with Heddon

- Andy Avery, Hexham Road, Heddton On The Wall - Labour Party
- Tom Hancock, Tyne Gardens, Ovingham - Liberal Democrats
- Peter Jackson, Edge House, Belsay - The Conservative Party

Ponteland West

- John Hampton, Bluebell Close, Wylam - Labour Party
- Veronica Jones, Wallridge Cottages, Ingoe - The Conservative Party.

The full list of candidates for the Ponteland Town Council election is as follows:

Ponteland North

- Lyle Darwin, Alexandra Close, Ponteland - The Conservative Party
- Richard Dodd, Ogle Hill Head, Belsay - The Conservative Party
- Christine Greenwell, Station Cottages, Ponteland – The Conservative Party
- Simon Railton, Simonside View, Ponteland – Labour Party

Ponteland East

- Susan Johnson, Cheviot View, Ponteland - The Conservative Party
- Christine Caisley, Peel House, Main Street, Ponteland - The Conservative Party
- Thomas Edwards-Clay, The Beacon, Prestwick - The

Conservative Party

Ponteland South with Heddon

- Sufi Ahmed, Callerton Grange Farm, Throckley, Newcastle - The Conservative Party
- Alan Hall, Linden Way, Darras Hall - The Conservative Party

- Vacancy

Ponteland West

- Adam Shanley, Alexandra Close, Ponteland - The Conservative Party
- Alan Varley, Elm Road, Ponteland - The Conservative Party
- Katrina Woodrow, The Drey, Darras Hall - The Conservative Party

For more information
on the elections visit:
[northumberland.gov.uk/
News/2017/Apr/Local-
elections-4th-May-2017.aspx](http://northumberland.gov.uk/News/2017/Apr/Local-elections-4th-May-2017.aspx)

MP confirms he will stand in June general election

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman has confirmed he will stand as a candidate in the snap general election to be held on June 8th.

The MP said: "I can confirm I will be putting myself forward to stand in the General Election here in our Ponteland on June 8th. It is an honour to represent local people in Parliament and I will continue to fight hard for our area. This election will be a choice of leadership for the country."

Full details of candidates will be listed in the June issue of Pont News.

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



County council backed planned housing developments are once again the main subject of your letters this month...

Don't confuse green fields and the green belt

Peter Sutcliffe (April issue) makes the point that Darras Hall was once a garden village in his support of the Dissington Garden village development.

He suggests that all homes in the area were built on green fields.

Both miss the point.

Firstly, we are not talking about green fields, but green belt. Of course everywhere was once green fields but the Tyne and Wear green belt was created to stop urban sprawl and to stop Tyneside coalescing with Northumberland to create one built up area.

It is in the protection of the green belt that so many residents, Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Green Belt Group, the Civic Society, Council for the Protection of Rural England etc have objected.

And it wasn't so long ago that the county council was stoutly defending the green belt at Birney Hill against Lugano's plans, only 300 metres from the latest application.

Secondly, Darras Hall was created in 1910 and has evolved over 100 years to its present form. Development was gradual. There are now 2,597 properties, a small shopping centre and first school.

Dissington Garden Village on the other hand will have 2,000 residential units plus commercial development. The whole site will be built in less than 10 years. This will cause huge pressures on the existing infrastructure and facilities in Ponteland that a relief road will not solve.

Trevor Hughes' letter highlights the lack of protest by the majority of residents and that too is surprising, since everyone I speak to expresses concern

about local facilities. I agree with him that more residents should stand up and be counted before Ponteland becomes a part of north Newcastle.

Finally, the online objector suggests that the latest proposal for 178 homes on the land west of Callerton Lane/east of Willow Way should be allowed as the land is of little merit and detached from a farm.

Perhaps he should wonder why there are so many tractors on our roads if he thinks all farmland is attached to a farm and where the feed for livestock comes from (which Dave Baxter's letter refers to). The farmer who has used the field for the 30 years I have lived here must think it has some value.

David Weissand
Willow Way, Ponteland

Car park on library land a much better plan

The headline in your April edition, heralding plans to "double the number of parking spaces" behind the Merton Way shops is a little misleading.

The quoted figures fail to take account of the loss of the kerbside parking along the link road that currently accommodates about ten vehicles, or of the 20 to 30 cars that can usually be found parked behind the walls that screen the shops' service areas.

The plan being put forward aims to remove these stone walls, along with the turning heads, to allow the installation of a continuous one-way service road running round behind all the shops.

This would do away with much of the rear-shop parking, expose the service areas to public view and require the new road to cut across the main pedestrian exit from the car park.

In order to provide additional spaces

within the car park itself the intention is to fell all but one of the trees and do away with most of the grass covered surround.

This has never been a very attractive part of the village and the removal of the stone screen walling along with the grass and trees would only serve to worsen the appearance of this rather unsightly space.

Equally to have a road for vans and other service vehicles crossing the main pedestrian walkway out of the car park is not an attractive or safe option.

The visual and other damage that would result from these proposals is too high a price to have to pay in order to squeeze in of a few more parking bays. Far better to use the £250,000 to provide a decent car park on the land where our library used to be.

John Hague
High View, Ponteland

Impractical and unacceptable to erect gates at entrances to Darras Hall

In response to Dan Keen's letter about the erection of electronic gates in April's edition of Pont News.

It would be both impractical and indeed unacceptable for electronic gates to be erected at all entrances of Darras Hall. To name but a few, here are some of the reasons why they wouldn't work.

Deliveries to the estate would not be able to be made (are all Darras residents prepared to go collect their goods instead of having them delivered?)

People from outside the community who wish to use the facilities would be unable to do so. The local shops I'm sure would be ecstatic (not) if outside trade could not take place. Chemist, restaurants,

June issue deadlines: Delivery of the June issue will start on Wednesday May 31st and be completed by Tuesday June 6th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Wednesday May 17th. If you are aware of any missed properties please contact the editor at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or call (0191) 3408422. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the June issue.

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

cafe, doctors/dentist and estate agent, to name but a few. School drop offs and pickups of a large proportion of children could not be made.

In conclusion, this subject has been raised before and as stated at that time, these are 'public' roads. If gates were erected, the residents would all have to pay for all road maintenance as well as the fees they already pay to the Darras Hall Estate Committee.

Somehow I do not think the majority of people living in Darras Hall would be happy with this outcome.

Furthermore, in answer to this gentleman's observation on Darras Hall becoming an "oasis in a sea of mediocre mass building" being the reason for these gates, lowering of house prices on his housing estate is not a valid argument.

Pauline Rossen
The Avenue, Medburn

Have you lost a ladies' gold watch?

A gold ladies' watch was found on Ponteland bridge on Tuesday March 21st.

If lost, please call (01661) 871659.

Henry Pringle
Henry Robert Hairdressing, Main Street, Ponteland

Darras Hall welcome to electronic gates

After reading Dan Keen's letter about electronic gates for Darras Hall I feel compelled to comment.

Please, please let Darras Hall residents have their longed for electronic gates – it will keep them in – and let's hope forever.

Who do these people think they are? Everyone who lives in Ponteland village and surrounding areas will be affected by the new housing proposals. Why is Darras Hall different? It's all Ponteland.

So come on you lot on your so-called privileged estate, don't just think of yourselves – think about all Ponteland residents during this crucial time when it seems we are to have massive development.

Jane Haddon
Thornhill Road, Ponteland

New 'library' a disgrace to the community

I was a regular client of the old welcoming library where friendly librarians would talk about books, always a pleasure to go there.

What have we got now? After many

months I had a lift to the new one, a comfortless corridor, a modicum of stock and the odd chair, a small room with one person at a computer, only two customers in the whole building and no proper librarians.

Altogether a disgrace to the community. A library should be a cosy welcoming space, good chairs and tables, periodicals and reference books to hand with knowledgeable staff. Is the county council hoping that no one will use it and that they can close it with impunity.

As a 90 year old I am beginning to think that there is a council conspiracy against OAPs making facilities difficult to reach. Plenty of examples: the health centre; the library; the redirection of the 74 bus service with nothing on Sundays on that route.

There are very few flats to rent ideal for the elderly with a resident warden, which is what I am seeking in the village centre.

Our councillors should be helping us. Did they protest about the library and the destruction of the focal point in the village just to build a few flats? I would like a reply from at least one of them.

Elinor Jones
Eastern Way, Darras Hall

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What's on...

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at 2pm on Wednesday May 3rd in St Mary's Church Hall will be David Jones and his topic 'Border Roads'. Visitors are welcome, no charge. Visit u3asites.ork.uk/ponteland or call (01661) 824953.

Kirkley WI

Our guest speaker at 7pm on Wednesday May 3rd at Kirkley Hall will be from Tom and Jo's garden centre and will demonstrate the art of making a hanging basket. Visitors welcome. Visit kirkleywi.wordpress.com

Ladies' charity lunch and fashion show

Charity Guide Dogs has a ladies' lunch and fashion show at Horton Grange Hotel at 11.30am on Friday May 5th. The charge of £24.95pp includes a welcome drink, two course lunch and raffle for Guide Dogs, with a talk from Guide Dogs and a fashion show from The Dress Studio, Jesmond. Book directly with Horton Grange on (01661) 860686.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our AGM starts 2.30pm on Monday May 8th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road. Our guest speaker is Dr Jo Bath and the subject is 'Tales of the Tyne'.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday May 8th at 7.30pm at Ponteland Social Club, Merton Way, Professor John Richards will talk about his life and his work with Alpines, with the opportunity for questions from the floor. Visitors £2. See alpinegardensociety.net/groups/North-East-England or email neegroup@agsgroups.org

Friends of Kirkley Hall

On Wednesday May 10th at 7pm at Kirkley Hall our speaker from Banks Mining will talk about surface mining at Brenkley and Shotton and the benefits after restoration to the land and community, such as wildlife habitats, sculptures (Northumberlandia), and Parklands. £5 charge for non-members. To book a place email fokh@gmail.com or ring 07751 974944 or visit friendsofkirkleyhall.org.

Ponteland Lions Club

Our next business meeting will be on Wednesday May 10th at 7.30pm in Merton Hall followed by a social meeting on the 24th. The next charity book stall is on Saturday May 27th from 9am to 4pm. For membership details ring 0845 833 9913 or visit our website.

Plant Heritage North East

The speaker for the meeting at the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Saturday May 13th will be Brian Young, who has a wonderful specialist nursery near Glasgow Airport called Holme Farm Plants. Brian grows and breeds Irises and will give a belt and braces talk about a plethora of Irises suitable for growing in the UK.

Ponteland Community Partnership

Come to a meeting and share your ideas, concerns and expectations for improving the quality of life in our community. All welcome. We next meet at Ponteland Town Council offices at 7pm on Wednesday May 17th for our AGM. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirley@reevehill.plus.com

Embroiderers' Guild Ponteland branch

On Monday May 22nd from 2pm to 4pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall we have a workshop with Anne Hefford on 'how to create a simple design using one straight stitch. New members are welcome – charge £4. Contact ponteland.eg@btinternet.com or call (01661) 881395.

Railway and Archive Films

Railway and Archive Films, with a focus on island railways, will be shown on Saturday May 27th at 3pm and 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road. Admission free.

Ponteland Bowling Club

Our qualified coaches are holding free introductory sessions for all ages looking for a new sport or hobby. All equipment is provided. Bowls 4 Fun sessions are available every Saturday in May and the first Saturday in June from 10.30am until 12.30pm. The club is situated on Darras Road between the Memorial Hall and the tennis club. Visit our website at pontelandbowls.com or contact Allison Storey on (01661) 872010.

Music in the Park

The eighth annual Music in the Park event is being held in Ponteland Park on Sunday June 25th from 2pm to 5pm. Confirmed acts include Ponteland Community Band, The Rendezvous Jazz Band and the North Tyneside Steel Band. The free event, organised by Ponteland Town Council, will be compered by Radio Tyneside as last year.

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 members are very welcome. Contact Alan Hall at alanhalleef@msn.com or on (01661) 860284.

Inner Wheel Club of Ponteland

We meet the first Tuesday of each month. Speakers, cup of tea and sometimes an outing etc. Any lady interested should contact Eleanor Carr on (01661) 871768 for further information.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Ponteland Floral Art Club meets on the third Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland. There will also be a jewellery stall that evening with items suitable for Christmas gifts.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We meet every second Wednesday of the month in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland at 2pm. Visitors are very welcome - £5 admission charge.

Pont Badminton Club

Pont Badminton Club meets every Friday evening between 7.30pm and 9pm at Ponteland Leisure Centre. Adults of all ages will be assured of a warm welcome. Just come along or contact 07986 388822 for more information.

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 - please telephone Pete Ford our Chairman on 07739 208308 and he will fix you up with a partner.



Children enjoy Easter egg hunt in the park

Children enjoyed a morning in Ponteland Park on an Easter egg hunt.

More than 100 youngsters and parents attended the event held on Easter Saturday, organised by Ponteland Town Councillors Sue Johnson and Christine Caisley.

Thanks go to businesses who donated prizes for the tombola, including: Jan's Kitchen; Rialto; Ponteland Tandoori; New Rendezvous; Davidsons bakers; Hooker & Young; Seven Stars; Waitrose; Elliotts; Co-op and McColls.

Councillors Johnson and Caisley also thanked everyone who attended the Easter Egg hunt and hoped they all enjoyed themselves. They plan to make this a bigger and better event next year.

Photos including cover shot by the Image Farm





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Park bridge reopened after refurbishment

Ponteland Park's Millennium Bridge has been reopened by the Mayor of Ponteland after a two week refurbishment project.

The bridge, which links two parts of Ponteland Park, was opened in 1999 as a Town Council project with generous support from the local CIU club and a local building merchant.

The refurbishment, carried out by a local environmental contractor RHD, included replacement of the steel railings with a timber look recycled plastic version.

The works, which cost £8,000, were funded from Ponteland Town Council's asset maintenance budget.

Image: Mayor of Ponteland Coun Carl Rawlings cuts the tape to reopen the bridge. Photo by the Image Farm.

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Celebrating 25 years in Newcastle

The region's leading bathroom specialists The Bathroom Studio are this year celebrating 25 years since they opened their luxurious bathroom showroom in Kingston Park, Newcastle.

And to help celebrate they are offering readers of Pont News & Views 20% off during March and April 2017.

The Bathroom Studio is still family owned and now run by husband and wife team Graham and Michelle Shanks.

Michelle said: "It was my father Jim Mongan who opened our first bathroom showroom in Durham way back in 1972. At the time he also manufactured luxury baths so travelled the country and the world seeing how the most successful showrooms operated.

"It was his ambition to bring the best products and services to the North East and we believe we achieved that with the opening of our Kingston Park Showroom in 1992."

The showroom proudly boasts over 65 stunning displays where you can find inspiration ranging from stylish contemporary wet rooms to traditional hand painted bathroom furniture. Each display is finished with full tiling and accessories so you can visualize how your own bathroom could look.

World renowned brands such as Duravit, Vitra, Hans Grohe and Laura Ashley mean

that the quality and variety of choice offers something to suit everyone's style and budget.

Michelle added: "We pride ourselves on offering the very best products and because we are an independent specialist we can choose to deal with not only the best brands but we can also offer a wider choice of specialist products such as Dansani, Bagno Design and Waters Baths."

So for those homeowners wanting to invest in a new bathroom in 2017 the expert advice and guidance provided by the team at The Bathroom Studio is truly invaluable.

Offering a complete turnkey solution of design/supply and installation right through to supply only of individual products. They offer professional advice to each and every client from design and layout to making sure the product specification best meets each individual's requirements and budget; and can even help with the all-important decisions such as tile choices and colour schemes.

If you are looking to upgrade your bathroom or ensuite this Spring then a visit to The Bathroom Studio is an absolute must and remember to mention your 20% discount from Pont News & Views.



T. 0191 271 5800
E. michelle.shanks@thebathroomstudio.co.uk
W. thebathroomstudio.co.uk

The Bathroom Studio (NE) Limited, Unit 4D Airport Industrial Estate, Kingston Park, Newcastle, NE3 2EF



Ponteland Community High School Report

Boccia team hosts taster session for Richard Coates Middle School pupils

Our Boccia team invited pupils from Richard Coates Middle School to attend a taster and training session.

The team - Jack Wallace, Connor Wright, Jake Cooper, Monika Prasad, William Fretwell and Joe Green - supported the pupils in building their skills and understanding of the rules before playing some super games; they were absolutely fantastic!

Every single student was a credit to their

schools and should be very proud of their achievements. We were so impressed with our Boccia team and particularly how well organised, patient and caring they were towards their guests.

The event was the idea of Curriculum Support Assistants Lynn Mordey and Andrew Storey. Supporting it, Rachel Miller from Smile Through Sport, was equally impressed with our students; so much so that she has offered them the opportunity of some work experience during the summer term.



Ponteland High students attend forum to discuss international issues

By Megan Bradley (Year 12)

Ponteland High students attended the EurVoice forum at Northumbria University to debate topical international issues.

The day started with students split into groups to discuss current issues, including reducing the voting age to 16, legalising cannabis, bringing in a minimum age for use of social media and the virtues of capitalism and socialism.

There was then a debate between four politicians: Sarah Thin (Green), Richard Wearmouth (Conservative), Mariam Waseem (Trustee of the British Youth Council) and Dr Nick Cott (Lib Dem) and a lively Q & A session.

The event was managed by former Pont High students Jai Marwaha and Owen Stratford (Newcastle University), Nikky Reddy (Newcastle University), and Camilla Hatling (Durham University).

All of our students spoke about how much they enjoyed the day. They were able to voice their opinions regarding each matter, and enjoyed hearing the responses and opinions of those who are faced with the calibre of such discussions on a daily basis.

The Pont High students involved were William Robinson, Joshua Beswick, Matthew Lee, Kieran Jones, Ryan Hirst, Ethan Wilson, Daniel Scott, Sophie Plumeridge, Rhys Cooper, Harry Storey and Megan Bradley.

Kathryn Tickell visits Pont High

We were delighted to welcome renowned Northumbrian musician Kathryn Tickell OBE as she visited the school.

The foremost performer of the Northumbrian pipes and fiddle, composer and educator, whose music is deeply rooted in the landscape and people of Northumbria, visited us in her role as one of the Directors of Magnetic North East.

This new project is 'celebrating and promoting the identity of the North East of England through its music arts, culture and heritage.'

Kathryn is particularly interested in encouraging harp players to promote Northumbrian music in the region and came to listen to Elizabeth Quigley play her Clarsach.

Elizabeth has been playing her harp for five years now and is studying for her Grade 4 ABRSM exam.

She has given many wonderful performances at school, home and in the Wansbeck Music Festival and is looking forward to the opportunities of promoting Northumbrian music further with the Northumbrian Ranters and, who knows, maybe even with Kathryn Tickell in the future!



Safeguarding arrangements praised after snap Ofsted inspection on high school

Safeguarding arrangements at Ponteland High School have been given the seal of approval by Ofsted after a snap inspection sparked by an undisclosed complaint.

Three Ofsted inspectors swooped on the school with just ten minutes' notice on March 9th after receiving a 'qualifying complaint'. The school was not given details of the nature of the complaint.

The inspectors studied records relating to child protection arrangements, records of attendance and behavioural incidents, and the school's processes for following up absence and incidents.

The Ofsted team also visited 33 lessons to check on behaviour and attitudes to learning, discussing behaviour with pupils before school, at break and lunchtimes and after school as they left for home.

In his report, HMI Mark Evans concluded: "Safeguarding is effective and behaviour is good. The school is effective in ensuring that pupils are well cared for.

"The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, and records are detailed and of high quality. You have created and maintain a strong and pervasive culture of safeguarding at the school. You, all staff and governors take your safeguarding responsibilities very seriously.

"Checks are conducted to ensure that the suitability of adults to work with children and school recruitment procedures reflect current guidance.

"Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online, because of the regular and effective actions of the school. Pupils also understand the forms that bullying can take and know what to do if it occurs."

The report made two recommendations for improvements, suggesting that sixth form students should have more opportunities to explore the multiplicity of modern British society and develop their understanding of how to keep themselves well and safe, and that disadvantaged pupils' attendance improves even further so that it is as good as that of their peers.

The full report can be found on the Ofsted website at ofsted.gov.uk

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Annual Town Meeting of Local Government Electors

The Town Council meeting was preceded by the Annual Town Meeting which 15 residents and Town and County Councillors attended. The Mayor presented his annual report for 2016-17 and he also presented the Meritorious Service award to Bruce Grant for all of his fundraising work over the years, both for the Pont Charity Group and as an individual. Mr Grant was presented with a gift from the Town Council and he expressed his thanks to the Mayor and Councillors for honouring him with the award.



Stannington Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Notification had been received from Stannington Parish Council that consultation had commenced on their Draft Neighbourhood Plan starting on April 20th and ending on June 2nd. Details of where to find the plan on the website and hard copies were included within the notification letter. A public consultation launch day was being held in Stannington Village Hall on April 20th between 2pm and 6.30pm. The plan can be viewed at spnp.co.uk.

Environment Working Party

The Council agreed the recommendation by the Working Party, which had met on March 20th, to defer the proposal to install a path from the Scout hut to the second footbridge in the park for up to a further year and include it in the budget for 2018-19, subject to discussions with the company involved regarding their price and whether it would remain the same. A letter had also been sent to the developers and residents of Mill Rise and it was agreed to contact the County Council to see if they would be able to make up the shortfall from any section 106 monies that had been received. The Council approved the award of a contract to the Rivers Trust in respect of seven erosion points along the river in the park. Phase one would be carried out with costs to be carried forward from the park budget and phase 2 would be funded from asset replacement and the funds would be replaced as part of the budget for 2018-19. The Chairman of the Working Party reported that planting had been completed at the sensory garden in the Coates Institute area. There were still some paving works to be carried out.

Highways Working Party

The Council agreed a recommendation by the Highways Working Party, which had met on March 22nd, to obtain a quote to paint the Darras Road bridge from the company who had recently completed the work on the Millennium bridge in the park. The Council also agreed the response to be sent to NCC regarding the consultation on the car park at the back of Merton Way. They recommended that the proposal be agreed subject to:

- Installation of the No Entry signage at the end of the fencing to Station Lodge to allow residents to legally access their properties without using the one way system around the car park.
- Installation of privacy screening such as a low wall in front of the Funeral Directors in the interest of public sensitivity and client dignity.
- Installation of appropriate privacy screening such as hedging or a low wall, in front of properties on Station Cottages and Station Lodge to prevent headlights disturbing residents.
- Use of the artificial grass instead of turf at the areas indicated on the plan. This was in order to soften the lines of the car park without the need for ongoing maintenance and grass cutting.
- Ask whether it is possible for NCC to supply an outline plan showing details of the landscaping scheme for the car park area taking into account the comments made above.

Cemetery Committee

The Council approved the schedule of fees to be payable from May 1st that had been recommended for Prestwick Cemetery for 2017-18 by the Cemetery Committee, which had met on April 10th.

Mayor's report

A list of events and meetings attended by the Mayor during March and April was circulated to the Council, together with details of forthcoming events in May.

The report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on April 12th.



Presentation to retiring councillors

This was the last Town Council meeting prior to the elections in May. Councillor Caisley presented gifts to Councillor Carl Rawlings, Councillor Joyce Butcher, Councillor Peter Cowey, Councillor Robin Ramsay and Councillor Liz Thompson. They were thanked for all of their hard work and dedication during their respective periods of office. They would be greatly missed. Councillor Lesley Noble was also retiring from the Council but was unable to attend the meeting. Thanks were expressed to Mrs Noble in her absence.

Application 17/00829/OUT - land to west of Callerton Lane and East of Willow Way - outline planning application with all matters reserved apart from access for erection of 178 dwellings

The Council had previously agreed a response to the above application that had been sent to Northumberland County Council on April 7th. The response has been circulated for information and a copy is available on the Town Council's website at ponteland-tc.gov.uk.

Requests to use Ponteland Park

Requests to use Ponteland Park have been received from the organisers of Party in the Park and Ponteland Rotary Club. The Party in the Park event is to be held on Sunday June 11th and the Rotary Duck Race on Sunday September 3rd. A request for the provision of toilets at both events was also made. The Council approved both requests relating to the use of the park and the provision of toilets.

Projects report

It was noted that several projects had been completed within the timescale allowed. These included the painting of the Millennium bridge in the park and the installation of handrails; the erection of the information sign on Meadowfield Industrial Estate and the acquisition of the new tractor that had been agreed at the last meeting.

Charity appeals for Ponteland residents to join fight against heart disease

The British Heart Foundation is calling on the people of Ponteland to help accelerate the fight against heart disease by joining their local fundraising group and raising money for lifesaving research.

Around 43,500 people across Northumberland are fighting a daily battle with heart and circulatory disease. Each year these devastating conditions claim the lives of more than 892 people in the county alone.

The nation's heart charity is calling on people across Ponteland to take heart and join the fight against heart disease by becoming part of their local fundraising group and raising vital funds for heart research.

Its fundraising groups are the face of the BHF in their local communities. From running fundraising events to supporting schools and local businesses



and organising collections, they are a fantastic way to support the charity's vital work.

Any time that you can give will be invaluable, because every pound raised from the BHF's fundraising groups will help fund vital research and identify new treatments that could help save lives.

Nikki Bell, BHF Fundraising Manager for Northumberland Tyne and Wear, pictured, said: "Heart disease is heartless. Too many lives are lost in

Northumberland each year, and we're determined to do everything we can to protect more families from this devastation.

"By signing up to your local fundraising group you can help us fund the research that's so desperately needed to bring us closer to beating heart disease. Together we can save more lives. It's also a fantastic way to meet new people and make a real difference in your community!"

BHF research has helped halve death rates from heart and circulatory disease over the past 50 years, but there is still a long way to go. Through the public's generosity the BHF will fund half a billion pounds of new research over the next five years.

For more information or to find your local group, please visit bhf.org.uk/localfundraising or contact Nikki Bell, BHF Fundraising Manager for Northumberland, Tyne and Wear by emailing belln@bhf.org.uk or calling 07702 726450.



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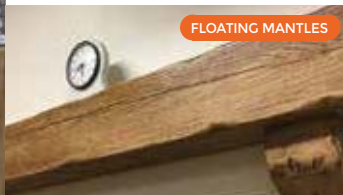
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