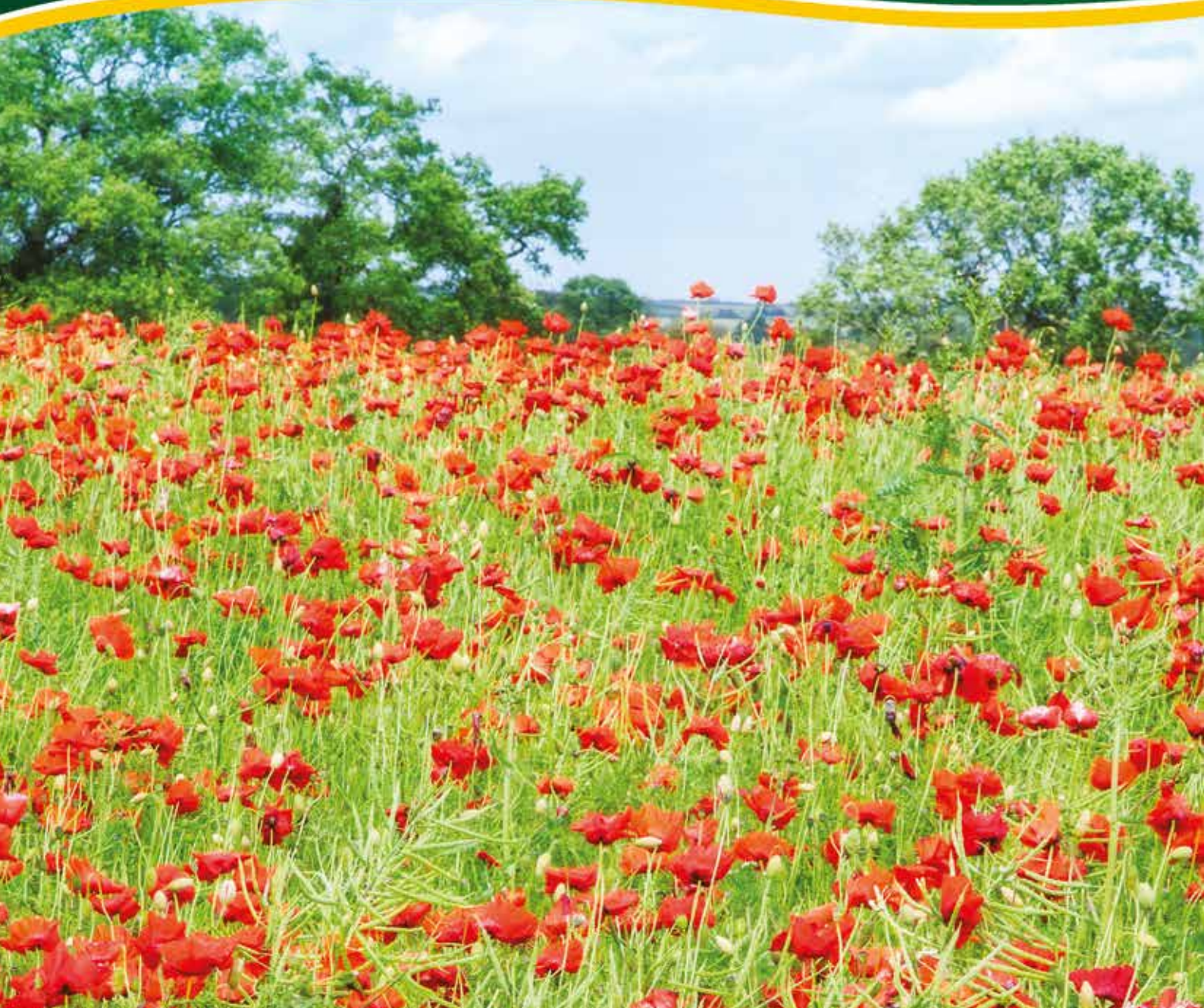


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Trust set to take schools out
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Kirkley Hall hosts British Eventing horse trials

Kirkley Hall once again hosted the British Eventing horse trials, held at the Northumberland College campus on Sunday June 11th.

The event, sponsored by Close House, attracted 250 riders from all over the North of England and Scotland who competed in the BE80, BE90 and BE100 categories.

Thanks to Trevor Walker of The Image Farm for these stunning images of the event.



Academy trust set to take schools out of local authority control

Five primary schools are set to join forces with Ponteland High School to create a multi academy trust independent of local authority control.

Belsay First School, Darras Hall First School, Heddon St Andrews CE First School, Ponteland First School and Richard Coates CE Middle School have all joined the High School in a six week consultation with parents.

The other schools in the Ponteland Schools Partnership - Stamfordham First School and Whalton CE First School - have not taken part in the consultation but can enter discussions about joining the MAT in future.

The move to create the

multi academy trust follows the controversial decision last year to restructure from a three to two tier system which this autumn sees all six first schools and Richard Coates CE Middle School convert to primary schools which will take in three to 11-year-olds and the High School expand to take in Year 7 and Year 8 pupils from September 2019.

A huge majority of the 1,200+ parents who took part in the restructure consultation opposed the changes and took part in a campaign and demonstrations last year.

Ponteland Community Middle School has already made an individual application for academy status, and is not involved in the two tier restructure.

In a letter to parents, Ponteland Community High School headteacher Kieran McGrane wrote: "You may be aware of the announcements by the Government making it clear that it wants all schools to become academies, or have a plan in place to become an academy.

"The preferred structure is a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), which is where a group of schools/academies join together and form a single trust company with a single board of directors who are responsible for the strategic running of the trust and are accountable for the trust.

"The Department for Education, Ofsted and the Regional Schools Commissioner are all supportive of MATs as are all three main political parties. There is also an increasing body of evidence demonstrating clear benefits when groups of schools work collaboratively within a MAT arrangement.

"An academy receives its funding directly from the Government and does not have any money withheld by the local authority to fund its services.

"During the consultation period on school organisation last year we were clear about the educational advantages

of moving to a primary-secondary model. Since that time we have continued to work closely with our partner first/primary schools and believe that now is the right time to consider forming a multi academy trust.

"Our preference would be to form a MAT that reflects the primary-secondary nature of our schools thus providing a clear structure and platform upon which to build. We believe that this is the most appropriate structure for a MAT as it enables the trust to plan for a child's journey from nursery/reception right through to A levels."

Meetings have been held at each of the six schools during the consultation and a decision will now be taken by each governing body on whether to proceed and submit an application with partner schools to the Department for Education (DfE).

The county council is currently reviewing all capital spending plans inherited from the previous Labour administration, including a planned £57m investment in education and leisure facilities in Ponteland which would see a new combined primary and high school and leisure centre, new primary school in Darras Hall and improvements at other schools.

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the natural way to see clearly?

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Today almost anyone can benefit from wearing contact lenses. With advances in lens materials and solutions, wearing contact lenses can be a convenient and comfortable way of seeing better.

So even if you have tried before without success, you should definitely try again. Research has shown that many people who drop out from contact lenses can be successful with today's modern lenses.

No-one is too young or too old to benefit. It has been shown that children can benefit greatly from wearing contact lenses and today age is no longer a barrier as bifocal and multi-focal lenses are widely available.



Contact lenses are a clear 'must' for sport

Contact lenses have many advantages for sport because they provide all-round, natural vision, are more stable than spectacles and are not affected by rain, fog or reflections. They allow protective eyewear or sunglasses to be worn which means a low risk of damage or injury.

Soft contact lenses are generally the best choice for active sports as these tend to move less on the eye and can also incorporate protection from ultraviolet (UV) light.

Types of lenses available

Daily disposable soft lenses

There are a wide variety of disposable lens options available; all of which you wear once and then throw them away. They are suitable for the majority of prescriptions including those with astigmatism. The great advantage with daily disposable lenses is that you will not require cleaning and disinfecting solutions.

Monthly disposable soft lenses

These are a popular and economical option. You wear your lenses during the day then take them out at night to clean and disinfect them. The latest silicone hydrogel materials allow longer wearing times.

Lenses for astigmatism

A wide variety of contact lenses are now available to correct your vision if you have astigmatism, including daily and monthly disposable options.

Multifocal contact lenses

If you are over 40 you may be starting to need a different power for your reading and distance vision. If so, these are the lenses for you. They are available as a monthly or a daily disposable lens.



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Ponteland Leisure Centre, Callerton Lane, Ponteland

A Ponteland girls' football team played in a Premier League stadium after winning through to the national final of an international tournament.

The players from Ponteland Community Middle School were among 32 primary school teams who competed in the English Schools' FA Danone Nations Cup National Finals held at Stoke City's bet365 Stadium.

They won the district competition, the county competition and made the final of the North of England competition to get through to the national finals – from the 6,000 boys' and girls' teams entered last September.

The Year 5 team comprised Zara Naughton, Olivia Brown, Bethany Hickman, Jessica Doyle, Erin Buckland, Jemima Aspinall, Ellie Winter, Izzy Robson, Katy Bullock and Brooke Williams.

Darren Alcock, English Schools' FA National Competitions Manager said: "It is an outstanding achievement for the teams that have reached the National Finals of the English Schools' FA Danone Nations Cup.

"Over 6,000 school football teams entered this competition for boys and girls back in September. We have already been lucky enough to witness some tremendous examples of skill, teamwork and sportsmanship along the way. The memories created for the young players involved will last a lifetime."

The Danone Nations Cup is the world's biggest international football tournament for 10 to 12-year olds. From England to Indonesia, China to Mexico, 2.5 million boys and girls in 32 countries participate each year.

Chief Executive leaves County Council after Tories take control

The change of political leadership at Northumberland County Council after the May local elections has resulted in the immediate departure of the Chief Executive.

Steven Mason, who had been with the council for nearly 15 years working in a number of financial roles, had been chief executive for the past three years.

The announcement of his departure "to pursue fresh challenges" was made within hours of Ponteland Conservative Councillor Peter Jackson being voted in as the authority's new leader at a meeting of the County Council.

The Conservatives took 33 of the 67 seats at the May elections, with Labour taking 24 seats, and are running a minority administration with

the support of independent councillors.

Mr Mason, who lives in Darras Hall, said: "It is with sadness that I have decided to leave the Council after nearly 15 years' service to the residents of Northumberland.

"During my time the Council has faced many challenges, most notably local government reorganisation and the impact of cuts in local government funding over an extended period of time.

"The Council's approach and direction will change significantly following the



Swift departure: Steven Mason

recent County Council election and it is an appropriate time for new managerial leadership at a time when the political leadership has changed with a radically different agenda."

Coun Jackson thanked Steven for leaving a strong and stable organisation which would give the new administration time to agree new priorities.

The current Deputy Chief



Interim Chief Executive: Daljit Lally

Executive Daljit Lally will be the interim Chief Executive while the Council makes arrangements for the appointment of a permanent replacement.

The Council said in a statement: "Following the formation of a new administration at full council it has been agreed Steven can leave immediately to allow a smooth transition to a new Chief Executive."

New area councils to devolve decision making to local communities

A new system of local democracy will allow communities across the county "to create their own futures", the new Conservative leadership has pledged.

Northumberland County Council has created five new local area councils which can make decisions on planning applications, road spending and petitions.

Ponteland will be served by the Castle Morpeth local area council, which will meet bi-monthly to consider planning applications, road spending and petitions.

Council leader Peter Jackson said: "We want to work with communities to help them create their own futures, rather than impose large projects or developments on them. These new local area councils are one way to develop a better future for the whole county.

"We want to be clear this is not a return to district councils, but about bridging the gap between an autocratic, centralised county council and communities. We value the work that town and parish councils are doing and wish to work closely with them, bridging the gap with a county council some see as distant and unengaging."

The move will provide savings of £250,000 over the next four years from reductions in councillors' allowances. For times and dates of the area committees go to the 'meetings' section on the front page of the council website at northumberland.gov.uk



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MP's honeymoon period continues

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman had two reasons to celebrate after a hugely successful general election campaign.

Not only did he record the highest vote share in the Hexham constituency since the 1950s – he also got married!

The snap election caught out many – including Guy and his partner Flora Coleman, who clearly did not expect to spend the first few days after their wedding on June 2nd together on the campaign trail.

The MP said: "There are only two MPs that can say they got married during their general election campaign, and I suspect there are fewer still who can say they

spent their honeymoon campaigning! I am in a select group of two with Clive Lewis, the Labour MP for Norwich South.

"Locally, I am pleased to have secured an increased percentage vote and the highest Conservative vote share in Hexham since the 1950s. With the election over it's now time to get back to work for the Hexham constituency as your local Member of Parliament."

A Boundary Commission review which would have seen Ponteland divided by two new constituencies – Hexham &

Morpeth and Newcastle upon Tyne North West – as part of moves to reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600, had not been agreed in time for the election.

The controversial plans would have meant a Northumberland MP represented one half of Darras Hall's Eastern Way and a Newcastle MP the other side.

Mr Opperman saw his share of the vote increase by 1.4% to 54.1%, but his majority was cut from 12,031 to 9,236 with a 3.9% swing to the Labour Party.

FULL GENERAL ELECTION RESULT:

Candidate	Party	Votes	Percentage	+/- %
Guy Opperman	Conservative	24,996	54.1	+1.4
Stephen Powers	Labour	15,760	34.1	+9.2
Fiona Hall	Lib Dem	3,285	7.1	+0.3
Wesley Foot	Green	1,253	2.7	-2.9
Francis Miles	UKIP	930	2.0	-7.9

Improving our clinical systems



During July, we will be changing the clinical system that we use, to one which is used widely across other local healthcare services.

This will help us join up our clinical systems with other parts of the local NHS and ensure the right information is available to the different healthcare professionals who are responsible for treating our patients.

What does this mean for patients?

As a patient you will see no change in the way that we care for you, but our new clinical system will help improve how our healthcare professionals share important information for the benefit of patient care.

For a few days in mid-July we will be offering slightly fewer routine appointments as we safely change this system over. Patients requiring urgent advice will still be able to speak to a healthcare professional the same day by calling the practice and will receive an appointment if required.

If you use our online services such as booking appointments or ordering repeat prescriptions, you will still be able to do this when we change to the new system. We will be providing patients who are registered for these services with the information they need to do this in due course.

We would like to thank our patients for their co-operation.



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



An appeal to support a charity bid and thanks for floral displays and an act of animal kindness in this month's postbag...

Floral displays are a delight

After nine days in the Freeman and RVI Hospitals with excellent care and food, it was a great delight to go to Waitrose and sit outside in the sun drinking coffee and reading a paper after shopping there.

The floral displays at the entrance and the outside sitting area are a delight and of great credit to the staff/partners.

Thank you.

John Percy
Ponteland

Can you help me set up charity to support flying doctors?

I have been asked twice recently to support the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF).

This is a group of engineers, pilots, administrators who - rather like the Australian Flying Doctors - save lives by flying seriously ill patients to hospital from remote forest and mountain sites hardly accessible on foot and certainly not in time.

Now this happens to be right up my street. Recently retired, I need an interest to avoid stagnation, and as an engineer, pilot and administrator of sorts - this certainly appeals.

However an individual is somewhat limited, whereas a team can achieve, and it only takes three to set up a charity - Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

If anyone is interested please contact me on (01661) 823606.

Bruce Grant

Former Secretary of Pont Charity Group, Old Station Court,
Darras Hall

Thank you for act of great kindness

I would like to thank very much the driver of the car who stopped on Eastern Way, near Willow Way, when my cat was killed by a vehicle on April 11th.

The driver took Muffin to the veterinary surgery where they were able to read his microchip and so inform me as to what had happened.

This for me was an act of great kindness which I appreciate very much.

Muffin's owner (name withheld by consent)

Willow Way, Darras Hall

DRAMA COMPANY PERFORMING AT METHODIST CHURCH

The Riding Lights Drama Company is performing at Ponteland Methodist Church on Saturday July 22nd at 7.30pm.

Their drama group Roughshod will be performing Re-Active. Light refreshments and strawberries and cream will be served after the performance. Tickets costing £5 can be obtained by calling (01661) 872297.

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August issue deadlines: Delivery of the August issue will start on Friday July 28th and be completed by Thursday August 3rd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday July 14th. 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 August issue.

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

What's on...

Ponteland Summer Food & Craft Fair

This three day event is relocated from Dobbies Garden Centre to the grounds of Ponteland Leisure Centre and will include a large marquee on the rugby pitch on Callerton Lane with more than 40 artisan traders selling food, drink and gifts. Entertainment includes a children's funfair, birds of prey, pony rides, face painter and a fun dog show on the Sunday. Free entry and free parking. The event runs from 10am to 4pm on Friday June 30th, Saturday July 1st and Sunday July 2nd. See advert on page 8.

Ponteland U3A

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month in St. Mary's Church Hall at 2pm. On July 5th Richard Booth will speak on 'Underwater photography'. Visitors are welcome, no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland or call (01661) 824953 for more information about us.

St Mary's Church Hall

Railway and Archive Films, with a focus on the North of England, will be shown on Saturday July 8th at 3pm and 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Admission free.

Darras Hall WI

Our next meeting will be on Monday July 10th at 2pm in Merton Hall, Ponteland. The speaker will be Pauline Edwards with a talk entitled 'Knitting for Charity'. Many charities from premature babies in hospital, to overseas charities such as the fish and chip babies are dependent on donated knitted garments. Come along and find out how you can help.

Ponteland WI

Ponteland WI meets in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month. Our speaker on July 11th is David Waters with a slide presentation and talk on 'The Work of Northumberland National Park Mountain Rescue Team.' Visitors are welcome.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

Discover what animals and plants can be found on the Northumberland Wildlife Trust nature reserves Havannah, Prestwick Carr and Big Waters in an illustrated talk by Mike Pratt, Chief Executive of Northumberland Wildlife Trust, hosted by Friends of Kirkley Hall. Wednesday July 12th at 7pm - doors

open 6.30pm. £5 non-members, £4 members. All welcome. To book email friendsofkirkleyhall@gmail.com or tel 07551 974955.

Ponteland Lions Club

Our next business meeting is on Wednesday July 12th at 7.30pm in Merton Hall and our charity fund book stall is at Waitrose on Saturday July 29th from 9am to 4pm. Membership enquiries are welcome. Ring 0845 833 9913 or look at our website.

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 July 19th. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirley@reevehill.plus.com

Rugby Club 50th anniversary fun day

Ponteland Rugby Club is holding a family fun day at the leisure centre grounds on Sunday July 23rd from 12noon to 4pm. Attractions include inflatables and rides, games and music, food and refreshments and stalls. See advert on page 6.

Embroiderer's Guild Ponteland Branch

'Kreative Kantha' workshop - if you would like to know what this is why not come along and join us with tutor, Lynne Hardy (Newbottle) on Monday July 24th from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road? Cost for non-members £4. Contact ponteland.eg@btinternet.com or (01661) 881395.

Weaving our history

Northumbria Basketry Group's 10th Anniversary Touring Celebration and Exhibition at The Hearth at Horsley, NE15 0NT from July 27th to 29th from 10.30am to 4pm. See northumbriabasketrygroup.co.uk

Stamfordham Village Fayre

Stamfordham Village Fayre, relaunched last year after 30 years, is on again this August Bank Holiday Monday - August 28th from 1pm to 4pm. See page 22 for more information.

Line dancing

We meet every Wednesday at 6.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Ponteland. We have lots of laughs, friendship and exercise to music. The cost is £20 for ten sessions. Dancing is at beginner and intermediate level and new dancers are always welcome. Free taster session offered. Contact Rosemary Gray (01661) 822493.

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.

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.

Beading group

Are you looking for a new hobby or want to improve on your skills? Why not join our beading group? We meet at Merton Hall on Tuesdays from 7pm to 9pm. Contact Marijke Shrivastava at mshrivastava@blueyonder.co.uk or on 0191 284 7266. Booking is essential.

Park party draws crowds for afternoon of family fun

Ponteland's annual Party in the Park once again attracted the crowds for an afternoon of family fun.



More than 2,000 people enjoyed the entertainment provided by Ponteland Community Band, Jill Errington Dancers, Darras Hall First School Choir and the Rock Choir on the main stage.

Other attractions round the park included bell ringing, a climbing wall, sheep stroking, archery and Punch & Judy – and the BBQ and Tea Tent which took record takings.

Radio Tyneside compered the event, which also included a family church service and was sponsored by Newcastle International Airport and supported by Ponteland Town Council, the Churches in Ponteland and local businesses.

Andy Anderson, from the Christian Churches together in Ponteland organising committee, said: "Thanks must go to all the helpers who put up tents, moved tables and chairs, lit boilers and fired up BBQs but most of all to those who stayed on and help us clear up in record time. A very enjoyable day for all the family."

Photos by The Image Farm.





This month's cover shot

Thanks to Pat Walker of The Image Farm for this month's stunning cover shot.


Pat spotted the field of poppies just off the Ponteland to Morpeth road near Cockhill Farm on her way to cover the Party in the Park for us.



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Scouts and Army Cadets receive awards at the Palace

Scouts and Army Cadets from Ponteland enjoyed a visit to Buckingham Palace where they received their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

The Gold Award involves five key components including completing volunteering, a skill and physical activity over several months, as well as a five day residential and a four day expedition over rough terrain.

The groups from 1st Ponteland Scouts and Northumbria Army Cadet Force (Ponteland Detachment) met the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward and his wife Sophie, Countess of Wessex, and actor Ross Kemp.



Right: With Ross Kemp are Scouts Amy Blackley, Rachel Kirtley, Jake Silipo and Theo Fisher.



Left: Pictured (l-r) are Army Cadets Joe Wilkinson, Hannah Duns, Chloe Richardson, Wayne Beck and Fusilier Daniel Temple.

Double award means two trips to the Palace for Rachel

A Darras Hall teenager enjoyed two visits to Buckingham Palace in a week after securing two top national awards.

Rachel Kirtley, a pupil of Ponteland High School, was invited to the Palace first to collect her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

But she was asked to return just days later to act as a steward at the Queen's Royal Garden Party in recognition of achieving her Queen's award, the highest award in the Girls' Brigade.

The Year 13 student, who is currently completing her A levels, has been a member of the 1st Ponteland Girls' Brigade since she was five years old. Her Queen's Award followed a trip volunteering in Kosovo, supporting war widows and their families.

Rachel represented Girls' Brigade England and Wales with a small number of other

Girls' and Boys' Brigade members, assisting the special guests, guiding them from the grand entrance to the Palace steps onto the lawn.

She also spoke to Her Majesty the Queen about her recent achievements, including attending the Palace for her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award the previous week.

Rachel said: "I had an amazing time, creating memories that will last for a lifetime."

Amy Blackley, who also achieved her Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award and Queen's Award with the Girls' Brigade (pictured in the group picture with Ross Kemp), could not attend the garden party due to exams. Amy, also from Ponteland, is studying Medicine at the University of Leeds.

A guard of honour for the 7,600 guests was formed by the Brigade members on their departure.

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Plans for new temporary fire station withdrawn

Plans for a new temporary fire station have been withdrawn pending a review into the whole £57m education and leisure scheme in Ponteland.

Northumberland County Council had lodged the planning application in May, which described the development as: "Temporary fire station on the leisure centre site to comprise of a two storey modular building and single storey appliance bay. The existing caretaker's flat shall be reused by the Police Service as part of the temporary relocation."

Twelve full time employees would have been based at the new station, with 14 car parking spaces.

Last month newly elected Conservative council leader Peter Jackson pledged a full review of the £57m education and leisure scheme proposed for the Callerton Lane site, which includes two schools, the leisure centre and fire station.

A county council spokesperson said: "The application for a temporary fire station has been withdrawn. All capital projects are currently under review by the council. The outcome of this review will be announced in due course."

Entries sought for 40th annual Flower Show

Entries are being sought for the 40th Ponteland Parish Flower Show, being held in September.

One of the village's most popular community events, it was started on the instigation of Dr Jack White in 1977 and the first show was held on Saturday September 9th 1978.

The show has always been held on the second Saturday in September and the 40th annual show is being held on the same date this year as the very first one – Saturday September 9th.

The committee is inviting children to design a 40th anniversary card and in cookery there will be a class for a 40th anniversary cake

where only the decoration will be judged.

There are also new classes this year, with a vase of Autumn foliage and a vase of ornamental grasses in the flower classes, while the dahlia classes have been simplified to pompom, cactus and decorative, and heathers will be either white or coloured.

In vegetables, a small cucumber class and vase of herbs are introduced. The children's classes are completely revised but still include some baking and "Me and My Pet" is added in photography.

New volunteers are now being invited to join and ensure the continuation of the show contact syd.cowan@btinternet.com or on (01661) 824459.

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Hospital charity celebrates 35th birthday

A charity which brings comfort to children during stays in hospital is celebrating its 35th birthday this month.

Radio Lollipop Newcastle was launched in July 1982 as part of the international charity formed a few years earlier which now has bases across the globe.

Kathy Hudspith, from Ponteland, has been a volunteer for nearly ten years.

She said: "Radio Lollipop Newcastle has provided care, comfort and play for the sick children of the North East since July 14th 1982, starting in the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital before moving to the RVI in 1988 and then on to the wonderful Great North Childrens' Hospital into their state of the art studio opened in August 2012.

"The volunteers form ward rounds to take games, crafts and music to the patients and their families. One of the favourite games is Headbandz and the ukulele is the most popular instrument.

"All ages, including babies, are catered for and our most recent purchase was sensory equipment to use with children whose condition meant that they were unable to join in other activities.

"We have a state-of-the-art radio station broadcasting shows - often using themes to tie in with craft activities i.e. pirates, Halloween, and jungle and requests are very popular. We even arrange studio visits for patients who are able to come along and be a DJ.

"All people past and present in Radio Lollipop Newcastle are volunteers and are proud to be part of the international Radio Lollipop family. I have been involved for nearly 10 years and have had the pleasure when on holiday the chance to visit Lollipops in places as far apart as Auckland, Perth and Kalgoorlie - usually accompanied by our station mascot Hubble the Bear."

Volunteers of all ages are welcomed and anyone interested should contact vc.newcastle@radiolollipop.org

Radio Lollipop Newcastle volunteers entertain a young patient during the 5th birthday party for the Great North Childrens' Hospital in 2015.



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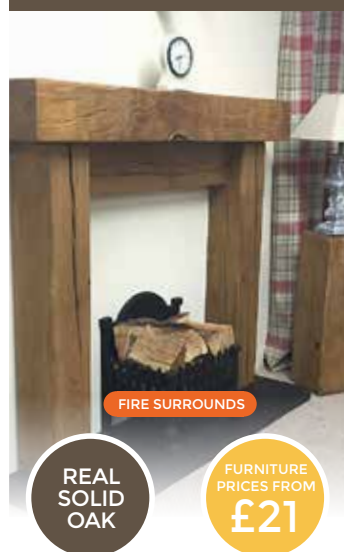
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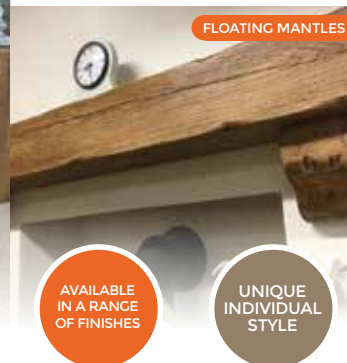
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CO-OPTION TO THE COUNCIL

Following agreement at the last meeting to fill the vacancy on the Town Council in the South Ward the Council agreed to co-opt Mrs Karen Overbury to the position of councillor. Mrs Overbury joined the meeting following this approval.

GRANTS – HOLY SAVIOUR CHURCH, MILBOURNE

The Town Council agreed the annual grant of £350 to the church which would be spent on grounds maintenance works in the churchyard.

ANNUAL AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2016-17

The Council considered and approved the Annual Return which must be submitted to the external auditors by 30 June 2017. A copy of the internal auditors report was also considered. He had no issues to draw to the attention of the Council.

AIRFIELDS OF BRITAIN CONSERVATION TRUST (ABCT)

The Council had been contacted by ABCT regarding a suggestion to place a plaque at Ponteland airfield. They had stated that an airfield had been in operation off Limestone Lane which operated between 1916-1919 as a military night landing ground for 36 Squadron. They suggested installing a plaque somewhere within Ponteland itself at a location to be suggested. The organisation would pay the associated costs and possibly the services of a local monumental stonemason but if planning permission was required this cost would likely have to be met by the Town Council. The Local History Society has been contacted and is very interested in the idea. The Council agreed in principle to proceed with the installation of a plaque at a location to be decided following discussions with the Local History Society and clarification of any potential costs.

REQUEST TO HOLD A CHRISTMAS MARKET IN MERTON WAY

Ponteland Rotary Club requested permission from the Town Council to hold its Christmas market in Merton Way this year on December 2nd. It was felt that this location may attract a higher footfall and would mean that portable toilets were not required. The Rotary Club is in discussion with a company regarding the use of covered marquees in case of bad weather and had taken some soundings from Merton Way traders and the county council which appeared to be favourable. The Town Council does not own Merton Way so could not grant permission but agreed that this may be a better location.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed the following recommendations put forward by the Working Party, which met on May 22nd:

- Not to proceed with the Green Flag project for the park following an analysis which had identified a number of areas where the park did not meet the criteria, such as the provision of toilets.
- The Town Council should be represented at the Britain in Bloom awards being held in Llandudno on October 27th. The Environment Working Party was given delegated authority to decide on attendance.
- Approving a request from the No. 1 Gym in Ponteland to hold a boot camp in Ponteland Park at no charge. This would be on a seasonal basis and an assurance had been given that benches in the park would not be used by participants. It was agreed to review this after three months.
- Replacing the tidy bear bin with an ordinary litter bin if required following vandalism in the play area at Callerton. The damaged seat and picnic bench to be replaced with recycled plastic alternatives in accordance with the Council's policy. Installation of CCTV is also being investigated.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported on the meeting held at County Hall on May 24th. Councillor Peter Jackson was elected as Leader of the Council and Councillor Veronica Jones was given the portfolio for Adult Well-Being And Health. Councillor Eileen Armstrong had been appointed as Chair of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council and Councillor Dodd had been elected as Chairman of Business. He stated that the new administration had many issues to resolve and they were currently working through these. The first meeting of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council was being held on Monday 19th June at 4pm at County Hall. This Council includes areas within the former Castle Morpeth district and would deal with local issues relating to these areas. The joint meeting with NCC and parish and Town Councils will be held in October. Councillor Jones reported that the grass verges had been cut for the first time in several years and the trees that had been felled at County Hall had been replaced. She also reported that the planning application for the temporary fire station at the Leisure Centre had been withdrawn.

Councillor Armstrong said Local Area Councils wanted to work closely with parish and town councils in their area although she stressed that the county council could not bring back the former district councils in Northumberland. Budgets will be determined for each local council and there will be discussion with parish and town councils about how these budgets were spent. They will deal with local planning decisions although major applications would still be decided by the Strategic Planning Committee. Applications for up to 100 houses would be determined locally. County councillors for Ponteland will still be holding surgeries on the first Saturday of the month at Waitrose between 10am and 11am. Town councillors are welcome to attend.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor reported on his first duties since he took on the role in May and forthcoming events. He thanked everyone who had been involved in the organisation for Party in the Park which had been a great success.

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

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Bridleway project shortlisted for regional award

Ponteland's bridleway project has been shortlisted for a regional award.

The community initiative has been nominated for the Best New Project category in the LOVE Northumberland Awards.

Eligible projects need to be less than one year old and fit the campaign's aim 'To promote improving the environment of the county'.

During February and March a community drive to give the bridleway between Callerton Lane and Rotary Way a revamp took place. Fifty residents of all ages from 10 different organisations turned up to give their support to the project, organised by Ponteland Community Partnership with the support of the NCC Area Countryside Officer.

They planted 75 trees and reinstated over 60 wild flowers. Now all this work has been done the final part of the project was to complement the communities' efforts with two educational interpretation pedestals to be manufactured and installed just in time for the Britain in Bloom judging at the beginning of August.

The research has been completed with the assistance of the Local History Society, Wildlife Group and Friends of Ponteland Park, who have all supported the Partnership to provide the

material for the interpretation pedestals which portray our local railway heritage.

Residents who would like to know more about the next project - the Old Railway Line from Rotary Way to the Airport - can find out more and get involved by registering interest at pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Winners will be revealed at an awards evening at Alnwick Garden on July 5th with presentations by The Duchess of Northumberland.



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Kirkley Hall Farm hosts International Sheep Dog Society Trials



Kirkley Hall Farm welcomed 50 dogs and their handlers from the International Sheep Dog Society for a Northumberland Heat Open Sheepdog Trial.

The event - the first Northumberland Sheep Dog Society Trial in eight years to be held at Kirkley Hall - saw shepherds from as far afield as Scotland to Manchester come to compete.

During the competition, dogs were guided through a series of commands to complete a variety of tasks that reflect their everyday work with a pack of sheep.

Each competitor started their race with 100 points and for every mistake made during the run judge Stuart Wallace - a well-known shepherd from the Borders region - deducted points.

The six top placed competitors of the day who

secured the most points were awarded with national points, meaning they will now stand a chance of qualifying in the International Sheep Dog UK Finals.

Kirkley Hall Farm Stocksman Michael Stephenson, who organised the event, said: "It's great to put Kirkley Hall Farm back on the map for these sorts of events, which are important in the farming community."

The 190-acre Kirkley Hall estate, along with 1,314 acres at Carlcroft Farm, provide a valuable hands-on teaching resource for students studying on Northumberland College's various land-based courses including agriculture and horticulture.

The farm runs as a commercial farming operation with sheep and cattle livestock as well as arable farming operations, providing financial returns to the college.

Michael is pictured with Peg, one of his four Border Collies. Photos by The Image Farm.



Young poets enjoy first literary success

Children from a Ponteland nursery will see their first poems in print in an anthology being published later this year.

The youngsters at Park House Nursery, Ponteland, were encouraged by staff to enter The Young Writers 'my first poem' competition.

The imaginative four year olds were given a template and were guided through the challenge by Early Years Teacher Katie McGeechan.

Four of their poems have now been selected for inclusion in the book My First Poem – 2017 – 'Little Stars', which is due to be published later in the year and available in many libraries across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Park House Nursery teacher Katie McGeechan with the four young poets.



Village fayre returns again

A village fayre relaunched after 30 years to great acclaim is being held again next month.

Stamfordham Village Fayre returned last year and organisers hoped it would be a fairly large event, attracting visitors as well as locals. They said it surpassed their expectations, describing it as "massive and a wonderful experience for all who came".

Next month Bishop Mark Tanner is opening the event but also attending as a Blood Bikes volunteer. Highlights include a teddy bear parachute from the ancient church tower, classic car show, over 20 stalls, pony rides, BBQ, cream teas, and games and activities for children.

The fayre is on Bank Holiday Monday August 28th from 1pm to 4pm.



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Hundreds object to plans for another housing development

Hundreds of objections have been lodged against plans for another large housing development in Ponteland.

The Hellens Group is planning to build 187 homes on land between Callerton Lane and Willow Way, from Callerton Court to Edge Hill, at the eastern edge of Darras Hall.

A mix of two, three, four and five-bed houses are proposed for the 22-acre site. They include 60 apartments for over 50s within a two storey complex with communal facilities, 50 3-4 bed houses for downsizers, 50 family homes, 17 bungalows and Dutch bungalows, and ten plots for sale for self builds.

The Washington-based developer says the proposals are "in keeping with the emerging Northumberland Core Strategy" and will include affordable housing and extra care facilities including ground floor ancillary retail.

Pont News first revealed Northumberland County Council was allocating the site for around 180 homes back in October 2015 when the authority published its revised core strategy.

Hellens held a six hour public exhibition at Ponteland Memorial Hall in February and an eight day online consultation which was later extended by a week. The firm, which had promoted the event and online consultation via a household leaflet drop, lodged a planning application with the county council in March.

As we went to print, NCC had received 919 objections to the planning application, with just one submission in favour.

Since the application was lodged there has been a change in political leadership at the county council, with the new Conservative administration signalling it does not believe there is any justification for development of the green belt for new housing.

New council leader Peter Jackson is also hoping to be able to amend the core strategy to reduce the current proposed housing allocations and release of green belt land for development.

The authority is awaiting news on a potential Government call-in for the 400-home scheme by Banks Property for Clickemin Farm. The 2,000-home Garden Village scheme proposed for Dissington Estate has not yet been referred to the National Planning Casework Unit due to an outstanding objection by Highways England. NCC said it was 'minded to approve' both planning applications in March.

No date has been set as yet for the determination of the Hellens planning application.

A visual of the scheme layout courtesy of Hellens Group.



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