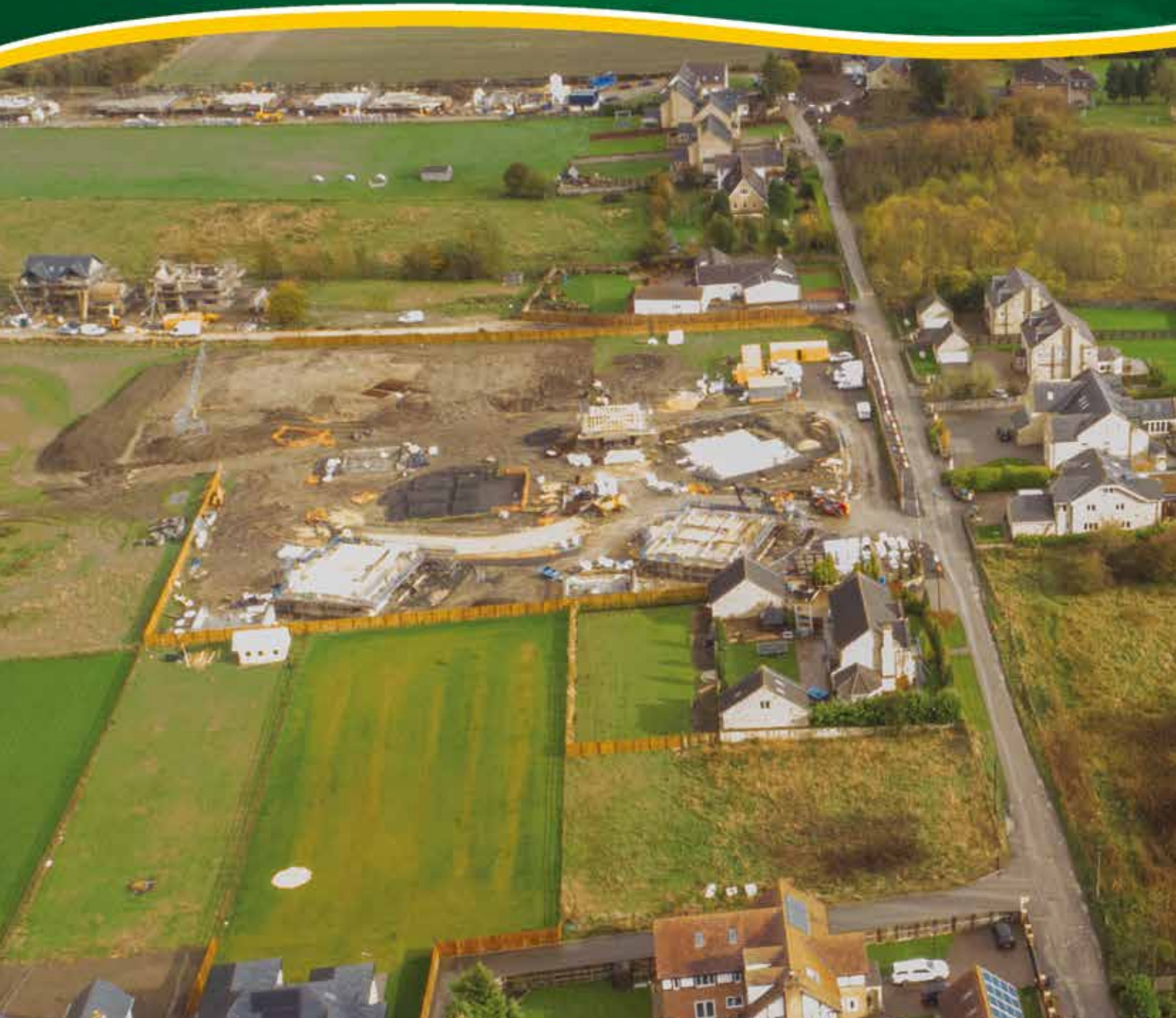


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New hybrid schools system leaves
parents with dilemma

Plan to split Ponteland parliamentary
constituency in two scrapped

Landslide referendum result for
neighbourhood plan

Medburn villagers demand action over housebuilding “chaos”



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Local growers take the top awards at national alpine plant show

Local exhibitors beat off competition from across the North of England, Scotland and Wales to win the top prizes at the annual autumn alpine plant show in Ponteland.

Visitors to the Memorial Hall were treated to a colourful spectacle of alpine and woodland plants, bulbs and many plants shown for their golden, silver and autumn foliage.

There were medals for competitors from as far afield as Carmarthen, Aberconwy, Bangor, Tranent, Cheshire, Lancashire and Harrogate who had showed plants from Tunisia, southern Greece, South Africa, New Zealand and China.

But the two big show awards were both won by local exhibitors.

Alan Newton (pictured above) from Ponteland was awarded the Ponteland Bowl for winning the most first points in the open section of the show.

Meanwhile the George Forrest Memorial Medal for the most meritorious plant in the show went to Alan Furness of Hexham for a large pot of crocus from the high mountain meadows of Romania, *Crocus banaticus* 'Snow Drift'.

Ponteland member Mala Janes also won a gold award for her photographic and informative display 'Woodland Wonderland'.

The show is organised by the Alpine Garden Society in conjunction with the Scottish Rock Garden Club and run by the members of the NE England group of the AGS.

Photos by Keith Robertson





Medburn villagers demand council action over housebuilding “chaos”

Villagers in Medburn claim their concerns are being ignored by county council planning chiefs allowing ‘unbridled land grabbing’ by developers after the latest in a series of housing schemes was approved. Chris Jennings reports.

Just a few years ago Medburn was a quiet hamlet of around 60 homes. But soon it will have tripled in size, once a series of approved housing developments are completed.

Many residents do not appear opposed to development in itself; the principle of extending the village by building up to 200 new homes was agreed 15 years ago when the former Castle Morpeth Council's

Medburn Masterplan was published.

But this framework for development assumed associated infrastructure improvements would accompany new housing schemes.

They have not transpired. Instead, there have been planning approvals for numerous small new build developments like The Nursery and others dotted along the end of The Avenue.

Today Medburn's central residential street, a narrow unadopted private road, doubles as a service road for the various housebuilders' wagons and other vehicles.

Villagers also await the start of work on 50 new dwellings by Miller Homes on a 4.4-hectare site just north of The Avenue approved last year, while a new 62-home scheme by Bellway Homes on a 6.6-hectare plot of land adjacent to the opposite side of The Avenue

gained planning approval on October 9th.

Our photos show the impact of the building works already underway before these two major schemes start.

The Avenue is clearly bearing the brunt of the additional traffic, with planning enforcement failing to address all the mud and potholes being generated.

Residents are also reporting noise from works starting as early as 7am and the

difficulty of access to and from their homes whilst battling against the wagons thundering up and down their front street.

Margaret Chaytor, who has lived on The Avenue with husband Robert for seven years, was among the 31 objectors to the latest planning application by Bellway Homes. No one supported the proposals.

She said: "We are not against development; we just want it done sensibly. But this is not properly planned – this is just chaos. It is a free for all. The democratic process is a sham. We have local councillors and an MP who appear unable to do anything. You feel helpless."

Another The Avenue resident has made a formal complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. She said: "Increased usage of The Avenue of both construction traffic from approved dwellings and resulting residential traffic is having a severe impact on residents.

"We are regularly blocked into our driveways as construction traffic queues up to get into sites. A large number of residents have sent planning officers photos and videos demonstrating the effect of the current works, however this has not stopped approval of further plots on the street.

"Due to there being a large number of sites under construction, residents are finding it increasingly difficult to identify which sites are responsible for the damage to their fences, walls, kerbs and cars - meaning we have all had to front the costs of repairs.

"The county council has to answer why it is ignoring residents."

In its objection to the Bellway Homes planning application, Ponteland Town Council said it had 'significant concerns about the scale of proposed development in the area'.

It wrote: "Medburn is a small settlement without any

services, only a limited bus service and poor paths for cyclists and pedestrians. The construction of 62 more dwellings in addition to the recently approved construction of at least 82 new dwellings will have an overwhelming and adverse impact on this small settlement and the C345, which is a narrow country lane and the only access road."

One of the problems for the county council is on previous occasions when it has refused planning permission for housing schemes in Medburn the decisions have been overturned by planning inspectors on appeal, including five homes at Prospect Farm in 2012.

A county council spokesperson said: "All planning applications are considered against all relevant national and local planning policies, and the comments of all consultees, including local residents, are fully taken into account.

"We understand the concerns of residents and have been actively considering the issues raised. This is rather a unique situation in terms of the number of developments all under construction at the same time.

"Unfortunately not all the issues can be addressed through planning enforcement - only those that are conditions of the planning permissions.

"We have been in discussion with the developers about conditions that are outstanding and will be monitoring the situation. We have also raised the issue of dirt on the roads from vehicle wheels.

"The road in question is not adopted by the council and therefore we unfortunately cannot deal with pothole issues at this time."

Cover shot: an aerial view of Medburn showing the land on the right where the 62 new homes will be built and on the left the various housing developments underway.



4

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Free community messaging system offers crime updates



By PC Darren Fisher and PC Ingrid Clayton

There have been 30 crimes recorded during the period from September 19th to October 14th for Ponteland and the surrounding area:

- Theft from motor vehicle – two
- Public Order Section 4 – two
- Public Order Section 5 – three
- Theft shoplifting – four
- Theft (other) – four
- Theft by employee – one
- Fraud – one
- Damage (other) – two
- Vehicle interference – one
- Rape – one
- Communications offence – one
- Coercive control – one
- Malicious communications – three
- Common assault – one
- Making off without payment – one
- Burglary dwelling – one
- Burglary other than dwelling – one

Your Northumbria

Your Northumbria is a free community messaging system which allows you to register and receive the latest crime notifications and community news happening in your local neighbourhood.

You can choose your interests: crime and other police incidents; rural policing; anti-social behaviour; road safety and neighbourhood news and events. You can also choose to receive your alerts by phone, email or text message and by area(s): school; home; places of work; elderly relatives.

To sign up go to yournorthumbria.org and register by clicking on the join button.

Anti-social behaviour update

Northumbria Police has undertaken reassurance and engagement patrols with resources from the mounted section, plain clothes officers, as well as high visibility patrols. Dispersal notices have been issued to those youths that have or are likely to have caused anti-social behaviour. Letters have been sent to parents of youths that have been gathering in large numbers to inform parents of the recent complaints of anti-social behaviour within certain areas of Ponteland and to ask for their assistance in this matter.

Parking

A reminder to drivers regarding parking specifically around school zones at drop off and pick up times. It is imperative that drivers must adhere to the legal requirements of the Highway Code, from which Rule 243 states:

Do not stop and park

- Near to a school entrance.
- Anywhere you would prevent access for emergency services.
- Opposite or within 10 metre (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space.
- Opposite a traffic island or (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle.
- In front of an entrance to a property.

If you have any information regarding the above or any other incidents, please call us on 101 or email easttynedale.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk.

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

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Landslide referendum result for neighbourhood plan

A neighbourhood plan which will help shape future development of Ponteland Parish has been overwhelmingly endorsed by residents at a referendum.

More than 96% of electors said they wanted the plan to be adopted as part of the future Northumberland Local Development Plan.

The plan, which contains 32 planning policies, has been produced over the

past five years by a group of volunteers working on behalf of Ponteland Town Council.

The policies cover:

- Sustainable development principles
- Protection of our built heritage
- Protection of the natural environment
- Growth of the local economy
- A mix of housing to meet local needs
- Community well-being

- Flooding and sustainable drainage
- Transport and movement.

All planning applications within the civil parish will now be assessed and decided upon using the neighbourhood plan with other planning documents.

The referendum was part of a five stage process outlined in the Localism Act 2012 which enables communities to take an active part in local planning. The plan and its policies need to be based on sound, realistic, robust information including consultants' technical reports and economic and environmental studies to fulfil legal requirements.

Alma Dunigan, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, said: "We are delighted with the support from the community, attending consultations throughout the five year preparation of the plan and giving us the outcome Ponteland will benefit from now and into the future.

"All 32 planning policies will form part of the statutory local development plan at Northumberland County Council and these planning policies will be used to determine planning applications and decisions."

The referendum result saw 2,629 'yes' votes (96.1%) and 101 'no' votes. Turnout was just short of 30%. The full plan can be found at: northumberland.gov.uk/ourplan



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Parents face dilemma with new hybrid schools system

Education systems are usually quite simple to understand. You either have two tier or three tier. But Ponteland now arguably has both. The resulting conflict could mean difficult choices for parents. Chris Jennings explains.

The change from a three tier system of first, middle and high schools to a predominantly primary-secondary model is being accompanied by a welcome £57m investment in three brand new schools and improvements to others in the Ponteland Partnership.

The full planning application for the combined primary and high school and leisure scheme detailed in the October issue was submitted by Northumberland County Council earlier this month and work is well underway on the new Darras Hall Primary School.

But outside this new two tier system Ponteland Community Middle School saved itself from closure by converting to an academy trust on September 1st, offering parents the continued option of three tier education.

However, the headteacher of Ponteland High School Kieran McGrane is warning that “very few places, if any” would be available for pupils leaving the new academy at Year 8 from September 2020 – due to the infilling of spare places at Year 7 from outside Ponteland.

So where would these children go? Kenton? Walbottle? Prudhoe? For parents wanting to guarantee their children attend Ponteland High School to complete their GCSEs and A levels the message from PHS is clear: they will have to join at Year 7.

So what options do parents have under this new hybrid system? There are essentially three:

- Remain in primary school to the end of year 6 then apply for a year 7 place in PHS
- Leave primary school at the end of Year 4 to join the middle school academy and decide to join the high school in Year 7
- Leave primary school at the end of Year 4 to join the middle school and remain in the middle school until the end of Year 8.

The looming problem for parents sending their children to the middle school is a reduction in high school places which it is being suggested would mean they will probably have to attend a secondary school outside Ponteland if they stay until the end of Year 8.

The reason for this is that Year 9 is currently the point of first entry to PHS and the school has a current capacity of 272 school places. But from September 2019 the point of entry to the school becomes Year 7 and the maximum capacity will be cut to 240 school places which will reduce out of catchment entry.

“Parents of Year 5 and younger children need to consider these choices carefully...”

There are currently 145 Year 5 pupils in the new primary schools and 150 Year 5 pupils in the middle school – a total of 295. But in future primary school pupils could be given priority for entry to the high school over middle school pupils leaving after Year 6. Those staying on until Year 8 are less likely to be able to join PHS.

Mr McGrane said: “Parents of Year 5 and younger children need to consider these choices carefully. The important thing to bear in mind is that if you wish your child to be sure of a place at Ponteland High School then they should enter our school at the new normal entry age of 11 (Year 7). PHS will not be able to reserve places for special entry at Year 9.”

Other benefits being put forward for by the high school joining at Year 7 include: specialist teachers for every subject from Year 7 onwards; strong continuity with form tutors and year leader remaining the same from Year 7 to Year 11; pupils having three years in school before choosing GCSE options – not one term as at present.

It would appear parents face the choice of either prioritising three tier education

or attendance at Ponteland High School; it is unlikely children will be able to enjoy both.

The Board of Trustees of Ponteland Community Middle School, part of Ponteland Academy Trust, is clearly unhappy with this. In a statement, the Board said:

“We feel very disappointed to have found ourselves frozen out of conversations, thus far, regarding the direction of Ponteland partnership schools. Trustees of PCMS have consistently listened, and responded, to the community and their parent body who overwhelmingly support three tier.

“With over 100 people attending the recent Parents’ Forum there was clear evidence to suggest that parents have a vision for the school and are keen to forge a unique future; asking trustees to investigate and explore options and solutions such as talking to the high school and extending the age range.

“The school is continually grateful for the outstanding support from staff, trustees, NCC, parents and the community keeping the children at the heart of what we do. This is reflected in the fact that the school is full and taking applications for Year 5, September 2018.

“It can be said, confidently, that PCMS is a middle school where primary aged children thrive in secondary facilities with both primary and secondary specialist teaching; and secondary pupils enjoy bespoke provision, seamless transition and greater responsibilities.

“The Ofsted Parent View shows overwhelming confidence in the school, its leadership; educational outcomes and the safety of the children.

“PCMS Trustees believe the hybrid system which now exists in Ponteland offers valuable opportunities for parental choice and we shall be consulting in the next few months to establish viable solutions.”

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



A claim council planning chiefs are scared to take on developers and criticism of the new school and leisure scheme design in this month's letters...

Our objections to 'unbridled land grabbing' are being ignored

Is democracy dead?

An article last year in PNV was titled 'Ponteland under siege'. Since then the Ponteland Green Belt Group has conducted a sterling campaign.

Unfortunately this has had a negative impact on Medburn. A hamlet of 70 houses has had planning permission granted for over 40 individual plots, an estate of 50 plots and most recently, a Bellway estate of 62 plots. This will impact on Ponteland schools, medical facilities and road safety.

Our local MP supported PGBG but there has been no reciprocal support for Medburn. Northumberland County Council has been too frightened to challenge the applications, fearing the loss of any appeals, and the 'democratically'

approved Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan, promoting sympathetic development, has no muscle.

We elect representatives, both nationally and locally, to fight our corner, but the continuous objections of Medburn residents to this unbridled land grabbing, have been ignored.

It seems that the democratic process just leads to disappointment.

Margaret Chaytor
The Avenue
Medburn

New school design straight from the 'Cornflakes box school of architecture'

When I saw the cover picture of your October edition, I groaned.

I had thought that the Cornflakes box school of architecture had had its day and ceased to be. Anyone who has had to maintain large flat roofs will know that leakage is inevitable.

Any of us old enough to have been in the assembly room of the former College of Education, later the Police Headquarters, will remember the buckets set out to collect the drips during a rainstorm.

A flat roof leaves no place for header tanks or air-conditioning ventilators, it will sag under snow load or as time takes its toll and a good slope is necessary to shed rain promptly. A trussed roof does not suffer from these drawbacks and will last a great deal longer. Few materials will remain impervious for long under ponding.

If the community regards the new school and leisure complex as a long-term asset, the architects should be asked to think again about their roofs.

John M Gill
Darras Road
Darras Hall

December issue deadlines: Delivery of the December issue will start on Monday November 27th and be completed by Friday December 1st. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday November 13th. 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 December issue.

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

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What's on...

Ponteland U3A

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month in St. Mary's Church Hall at 2pm. On November 1st Gordon Henderson's title is 'Roman Medicine' and on December 6th Trevor Taylor will entertain us with 'Comedy Songs and Monologues' followed by the choir, carols and our faith tea. Visitors are always welcome; there is no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland or call (01661) 824953.

Kirkley WI

Kirkley WI meets at Kirkley Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm. Our guest speaker on November 1st is Graham Mitcheson who will talk about Bolam Lake. Guests welcome. Visit kirkleywi.wordpress.com

Ponteland Means Business

Ponteland Means Business meets at the Diamond Inn from 8am to 9.30am on the first Tuesday of each month, with future dates of November 7th and December 5th. Contact Brian Russell at brian.russell@profitabilitygroup.co.uk or on (01661) 872004.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

Dr Anne Wilson will talk about 'Breeding birds of the Farnes in the 19th century' on Tuesday November 7th at 7.30pm in St Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road. Admission £2 includes refreshments. Open to all.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday November 8th at 2pm in the Memorial Hall, when Tony Brown will demonstrate 'The Joy of Christmas'. Stalls include plants, produce/cakes, jewellery, wood turning, tombola, raffle. Visitors welcome; cost £6 to include refreshments.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

On Wednesday November 8th at 2pm in the Blue Room at Kirkley Hall we have 'Striking success – a blacksmith with flair' – an illustrated talk by Stephen Lunn. Visitors welcome - cost £5. To book email friendsofkirkleyhall@gmail.com or ring 07551 974955.

Ponteland Lions Club

Our next meeting is at 7.30pm on Wednesday November 8th in Merton

Hall. Visitors welcome. Come along and find out how Lions serve the community. Our social meeting will be on November 22nd and our monthly charity fund book stall will be at Waitrose on Saturday November 25th from 9am to 4pm. For details ring 0845 833 9913 or visit our website.

St Mary's Church Hall

Railway and Archive Films on a remembrance theme will be shown on Saturday November 11th at 3pm and 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Admission free.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

At our meeting at 2.30pm on Monday November 13th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, Olly Burton will talk about 'How they made the Lindisfarne Gospels'.

Ponteland WI

We meet in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month. Our speaker on November 14th Mrs R Barnes will present a talk and slide show on the Twelve Days of Christmas including cards and decorations. Visitors welcome.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday November 14th at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, our member Lorna is talking to us about 'Have Needle, Will Travel' and we will be making something to take home. Contact pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Ponteland Community Partnership

Come to a meeting and share your ideas, concerns and expectations for improving the quality of life in our community. All welcome. We next meet at Ponteland Town Council offices at 7pm on Wednesday November 15th. There is no meeting in December. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirley@reevehill.plus.com

Ponteland Local History Society

Our next meeting at St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland is 7.30pm on Thursday November 16th

when Geoff Hughes will talk on 'Strange tales of old Newcastle'. Membership is open to all with annual subscription £6 (single) £10 (couple). Visitors £2.

Ponteland Photographic Society

Ponteland Photographic Society meets at 7.30pm on Monday November 20th at Merton Hall with guest speaker Dave Dixon and his subject 'places, projects and pictures'. New members welcome. See pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk

Embroiderer's Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday November 27th from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall on Darras Road we will have 'Christmas surprise - come and make a little festive item'. Cost £4. All welcome. Contact penelopeford636@btinternet.com or 01670 788278.

Ponteland Civic Society

The next meeting of the Ponteland Civic Society will be held on Monday November 27th at Ponteland CIU Club at 7.30pm when member Tony Stephenson will speak on 'Dunston – Staiths, Steamers and Teemers'. Visitors welcome - charge £2.

Ponteland Rotary Club Christmas Market

This year's Christmas market is being held at Merton Way on Saturday December 2nd from 11am to 3pm. Crafts, gifts, mulled wine, great and Santa! All profits to Ponteland Rotary Clubs' chosen charities.

Scottish Country Dancing

Bullocksteads Scottish Country Dance Club meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from September to April at Dalton Village Hall from 7.30pm to 10pm. Live music. Cost £5 per session. Pooled supper. A friendly social class. All welcome, no need to have a partner. Have fun, exercise and make new friends. Contact Ruth on (01661) 881654 or just turn up.

Ponteland writers

A friendly group with mixed writing ability and experience. We meet every Wednesday at Post Box coffee shop from 7pm to 9pm. New members welcome.



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Public meeting called to discuss disorder problem

A public meeting has been called to discuss complaints about youth disorder in Ponteland.

Northumbria Police, Ponteland Town Council and Northumberland County Council have recently been in receipt of complaints from members of the community regarding alleged youth disorder in the town.

At a recent multi agency meeting held to assess the issues, which involved other partner agencies including Ponteland High School, Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service and Youth Services, it was acknowledged that public perceptions of groups of youths hanging around in public places can cause a fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

The multi-agency partnership would like to reassure the community that whilst some incidents of anti-social behaviour do occur, police and partners have been engaging with our young people regularly and have received a very positive reception. Most are gathering with friends without causing any problems.

The partnership also identified a lack of provision for young people in the town on Friday and Saturday nights, despite the groups identifying that they would like some more productive activities to get involved in.

In response, the Town Council has committed to work together with agency partners to address this and give young people a say in what is provided. We would welcome assistance from the local community to support our young people and feedback any concerns.

We would therefore like to invite residents to attend a public meeting on Tuesday November 7th at 7pm at Ponteland Leisure Centre.

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Haveli adds another Michelin accolade to its awards menu

Darras Hall's Haveli restaurant has won a Michelin Bib Gourmand – to add to its lengthy menu of industry awards.

Bib Gourmands are awarded to restaurants recognised for offering "exceptionally good food at moderate prices" – and Haveli is one of only nine Indian restaurants in the UK to boast the honour.

It is the latest in a string of awards for the restaurant. They include entries in the Michelin Guide in 2016 and 2017, TripAdvisor Certificates of Excellence in 2015, 2016 and 2017 and Asian Restaurant of the Year 2014 and 2015 by The Journal's Secret Diner.

The word Haveli in Hindi means a private mansion, usually with historical and architectural significance, and aptly reflects the understated sophistication of the upmarket surroundings of the Broadway restaurant.

Head Chef Anil Gulati, who has run the kitchen since the restaurant's launch in 2013, trained with the famous Oberoi Group and later joined the Radisson in New Delhi as a senior chef having also worked in the Middle East, Russia, Eastern Europe and London.

Owner Sunil Mehra said: "As one of only nine Indian restaurants with a Bib Gourmand in the UK, we're particularly privileged to have been recognised by Michelin and receive such an honour

in the 2018 Guide.

"I'm very proud of our fantastic team who are committed to creating and serving the freshest, most authentic and flavoursome Indian food in the region. More importantly, we'd like to thank our wonderful

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Plan to split Darras Hall street in two by boundary review scrapped

Proposals which would have seen a street in Darras Hall effectively split in two – with one side having one MP and the opposite side another – have been scrapped.

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

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

The proposed moves were part of the countrywide review being undertaken by the Boundary Commission designed to help ensure every constituency has roughly the same number of voters, while cutting the total number of MPs in the

House of Commons from 650 to 600.

The number of MPs in the North East will be cut from 29 to 25 by the changes, due to be introduced in time for the scheduled 2022 general election.

However, on October 17th the Boundary Commission announced major changes to its proposals for the region. Now it is recommending a new Hexham & Cramlington constituency to contain all four Ponteland wards.

A number of the representations received during last year's consultation exercise had expressed concern at the plans, which would meant Eastern Way in Darras Hall would have been split in

two, with one half having a Northumberland MP and the other half a Newcastle MP.

Northumberland County Councillor Eileen Armstrong, who represents the Ponteland East ward, had made representations to the Boundary Commission's public hearing in Newcastle and has welcomed the withdrawal of the original proposals, which had also attracted opposition from Hexham MP Guy Opperman and local residents.

She said: "It is great to report that Ponteland will stay united and will continue to be represented by one MP. Residents did not want Ponteland to be divided into two seats with two MPs and made their views clear that all four wards should remain

in one constituency with one MP.

"I cannot thank the residents of Ponteland East and Stannington enough for the outstanding support they gave. The Boundary Commission has listened to the people of Ponteland."

Mr Opperman added: "The Boundary Commission proposals are good overall but I am keen for Bellingham to remain in the Hexham constituency and I will be making that case to the Boundary Commission during the consultation process."

Members of the public can comment on the revised proposals via the website at bce2018.org.uk until December 11th.

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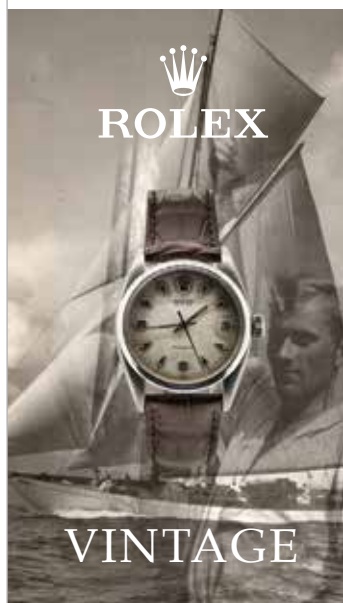
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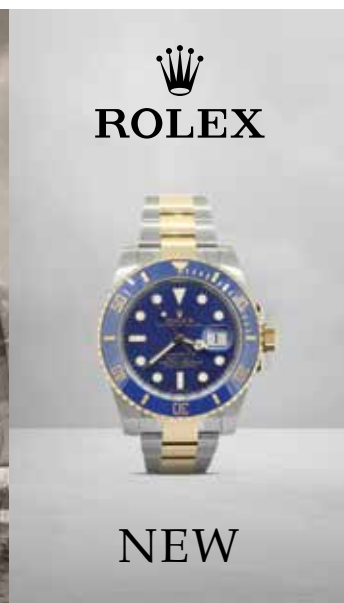
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Winter warmers in Ponteland and Darras Hall

By Muriel Sobo

The winter months are nearly here now and the opportunities for a walk-in light lunch are varied.

Feel free to come along and socialise. There are three possibilities throughout the winter and these venues offer soup and sandwiches or a generous slice of home-made cake.

Everyone is welcome and it is a great chance for a bit of gossip and to make some new friends. The charges are very modest.

On Mondays there is Open Door at the Methodist Church from 1pm to 4pm.

On Fridays the URC on the Broadway, Darras Hall, offers soup and sandwiches from 12.30pm to 1.30pm.

Also on Fridays St Matthew's Church on the West Road offers a cooked meal ordered in from the school kitchen



between 12noon and 1.30pm. Please book by Thursday by ringing Margaret on (01661) 825472.

On the last Friday of the month you can stay here for Happy Days from 1pm to

3pm, when cakes and tea are provided along with plenty of conversation and musical memories.

Volunteers at the URC on Broadway relax after serving up the Friday offering.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

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Pharmacists Jessica Taylor and Trevor Duffield are administering the flu vaccines from mid-September until January, with a no appointment daily walk-in service Monday to Saturday.

- Avoid waiting at your GP surgery
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- Private service also available - cost £12
- Flu vaccine service at your own home - (appointment only)



Ponteland Rep wins prestigious award

By Lesley Eltringham

Ponteland Repertory Society has won a top award for the dramatic celebration of its 90th anniversary this year.

The Northern Operatic and Drama Association awarded the Best Performance Award to Ponteland Rep at a glittering awards ceremony at the Marriott Gosforth Park.

Deborah Barry, the musical director for the performances of 'Around the World in 90 Years', which took place in April and involved many performers including the Preppies Youth Theatre, collected the award on behalf of the Society.

Pont Rep's next production is 'The King and I' which

takes place at the Memorial Hall from Wednesday November 29th to Saturday December 2nd at 7pm with a matinee on Saturday at 2pm. Tickets are available online from ticketsource.co.uk/pontelandrepertorysociety or from Ponteland Hardware in Merton Way.

Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1956 musical is set in 19th-century Thailand. The King and I's score contains the most enduring numbers 'Getting to Know You', 'Something Wonderful', 'Hello, Young Lovers' and 'Shall We Dance'. Interestingly the lead roles the King and Anna are played by husband and wife team Brian and Deborah Barry!

We look forward to welcoming our wonderful and supportive audiences just before the Christmas festivities begin.



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PRESENTATION BY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service Chief Fire Officer Paul Hedley attended to respond to the Town Council's submission on the recent Fire and Rescue Service consultation which had raised queries about resources. Giving a presentation on resources and availability of fire service personnel and appliances across the county, Mr Hedley said there was always appropriate cover from either West Hartford or West Denton stations for Ponteland. He reported problems with the recruitment of retained officers and outlined efforts to boost the numbers of retained officers in the county.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Coun Richard Dodd reported that he was trying to progress the works to the car park at the back of Merton Way. There was some discussion re the timing of these works and councillors hoped it could coincide with school holidays to avoid major traffic disruption. He said the planning application for the new school and leisure complex would be lodged soon with a 12-week consultation period. He also reported plans for a school crossing patrol warden at Darras Hall Primary School were being hampered by problems with recruitment.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Councillors agreed a grant of £6,300 following an application from Ponteland Memorial Hall for assistance towards general running costs and essential maintenance. The grant had been included in the budget for this year.

REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

The Council was pleased at the recent positive result from the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Referendum and expressed sincere thanks to the chairman and members of the Steering Group who had worked on this plan for the last five years, delighted that it had finally come to fruition.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on October 11th 2017.

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Funding secured for next phase of bridleway revamp

Funding has been secured for the second phase of the bridleway revamp project to spruce up the former railway line from Rotary Way to the airport.

Ponteland Community Partnership successfully bid for a grant of £3,689 from Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland from the Local Environmental Action Fund.

The next community event is being held on Saturday November 4th (weather permitting) to include pruning, and planting around 100 trees and wild flowers.

A local landowner has offered to improve a very wet area of the path and the NCC Countryside Officer will organise the widening of the footpath and provide three perch benches.

The grant will fund three educational pedestals, showing more railway heritage, local information on Prestwick Pit and the original airfield, which will be installed at the end of the project.

A 'Celebration of Community Spirit' marking the end of the first phase of the project was held at the Callerton Lane end of the bridleway with a cutting of the ribbon by Ponteland Mayor Alan Varley and BBC Radio presenter Marianne Foster.

This initial phase, which saw tidying up, pruning, the planting of 75 trees and wild flowers and widening of the footpath last

spring, received a 'highly recommended' accolade at the Northumberland LOVE Awards. The bridleway has also been designated a Wildlife Corridor.

Alma Dunigan, Chairman of Ponteland Community Partnership, said: "We are grateful to the Local History Society and all the other organisations, individuals and Ponteland 1st Scouts for all their hard work earlier in the year. We now need to get your support for this next piece of work all those wishing to be involved can register their interest by our website."

The web address is pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk





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Why Not Join Rotary?

Have you thought about becoming a member of Ponteland Rotary Club?

The Club consists of a group of almost 40 people from Ponteland and the surrounding area. They meet on a regular basis for a bite to eat, to socialise & to plan activities & events. One of the main aims of the Club is to raise money for good, charitable causes. The Club through its annual programme produces thousands of pounds per year for charity.

Lady President, Suzanne Marshall said, "I joined Rotary several years ago and I have to say that I get a great deal from the activities of the Club. The rules about having to attend meetings every week are gone now and I think Rotary is such a good way to try to give something back."

"The other idea about Rotary just being a gathering of older people is just not true. We have a spread of age groups & we also have our Satellite Group which consists of individuals who are still engaged in full-time work. They do not attend the regular meetings but meet up every few weeks in the evening to plan their activities."

If you would like to know more, please ring Alan Hall on 07740 866764 or email on alanhalleef@msn.com



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SIGNATURE MENU - 26.95 per person

Enjoy Chef Anil's selection of Signature starters including specialities from the tandoor like Coastal King Prawns and Seekh Gilafi. This is followed by your choice from our Signature curries which include the ever popular Railway Lamb Curry made with slow braised Northumbrian lamb and our delicately spiced Goan King Prawns. Served with sides including Bombay Aloo, Dal Makhani, Basmati Pilau and a basket of assorted naan breads.



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