

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district

150th
issue



Ancient landmark inspires new
schools trust

New service to give OAPs a
breath of fresh air

Second Britain in Bloom call-up
for Ponteland

School secures Premier League trophy

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Serving the Ponteland community since 1996.

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Produced by Cian creative pr



Elusive trophy finally comes to the North East

It has evaded Newcastle United for 25 years, but children at a Ponteland school saw the Premier League trophy face to face thanks to a generous local business.

Glenda Toft, whose Toon-supporting husband Noel is MD of Meadowfield Industrial Estate based street lighting manufacturer Toftco, won the prize at a charity auction of the trophy being brought to a venue of your choice for the day.

She decided to donate the unique experience, following her winning bid at the Alan Shearer Foundation charity ball held at Gateshead's Hilton Hotel, to Ponteland Community Middle School, where her niece Freya Thompson, 10, is a pupil.

The school also won a set of 18 bespoke designed Nike football strips and all pupils had their photo taken with the trophy, amid tight security.

Hopefully the trophy will one day return to the North East!

Glenda and Noel Toft, and children from PCMS, are pictured with the trophy. Photos by The Image Farm.





Dog waste reports on the rise



By PC Darren Fisher and PC Ingrid Clayton

There have been 36 crimes recorded during the period from January 15th to February 12th for Ponteland and the surrounding area:

- Child grooming – one
- Sex offence female under 16 – one
- Import of a controlled drug – one
- Section 47 assault – one
- Common assault – three
- Stalking – one
- Malicious communications – three
- Public Order – four
- Burglary dwelling – one
- Theft of motor vehicle – two
- Theft from motor vehicle – one
- Theft shoplifting – two
- Theft other – six
- Theft from person – two
- Damage to dwelling – one
- Damage to motor vehicle – four
- Damage other – two.

Dog waste

There has been recent information passed by members of the local community about the increase in dog waste, especially around Thornhill Road and Thornhill Park. Please could dog walkers act responsibly and remove any waste appropriately.

Pubwatch scheme

Recently the Ponteland Pubwatch scheme was re-introduced with monthly meetings to promote good business and prevent crime and disorder/public nuisance. The police are invited as guests to these meetings to discuss incidents that have occurred over the past month. Inappropriate behaviour by people in and around licenced premises is discussed. One

potential sanction is being barred from entering premises associated with the scheme for a period of time ranging from three to 12 months.

Community engagement

The Neighbourhood Policing team has been making regular visits to Ponteland Community Middle School. The emphasis has been on speaking to the Year 7 and Year 8 students to promote a positive relationship between the police and students, with discussions encouraged through questions and answers. The children used their imagination to ask questions which ranged from 'which celebrity would you like to be on a desert island with' to the latest technological advances we could use to support us in our day to day role.

Pupils were also shown policing equipment and techniques, including handcuffs and limb restraints and enjoyed taking part in role playing scenarios of being arrested and taken into custody. The sessions were informative and fun; we received positive feedback from both staff and students and hope to continue developing this form of community engagement.

If you have any information regarding the above or any other incidents:

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*Smile evaluation appointment may be carried out by a Treatment Coordinator



150 not out!

Landmark issue for magazine



150 not out! Bringing you the news every month since 2005.

Twelve-and-a-half years on from its launch, your community magazine Pont News & Views has reached 150 not out!

It has been published and delivered free to nearly 5,000 homes and businesses across Ponteland parish every month since our first edition back in October 2005.

The not-for-profit publication, which is fully funded by advertising, was launched by the former Ponteland Parish Council and Ponteland Community Partnership to replace the monthly Neighbourhood Watch bulletin and the Council's quarterly newsletter.

The very first issue was just eight pages and included articles on work starting on the new first school, progress on the build of a new health centre, the start of consultation on a village centre regeneration blueprint and our first what's on guide.

Since then we have covered all the major events and issues to affect the parish, from the flooding in September 2008 to the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June 2012.

The wide variety of community events the

parish enjoys, including the Party in the Park, Duck Race, Wheelbarrow Race and Flower Show, give us plenty of photographic opportunities.

Successful community campaigns we have featured include opposition to plans to build a phone mast outside the former Darras Hall First School in 2010 and the high profile protest against green belt development at Birney Hill between 2013 and 2015.

In recent years we have retained the popular letters page, what's on guide and police column, but with increased advertising have had the space to add in-depth features on the major issues affecting the parish including education reorganisation and key developments including the new £46m schools and leisure scheme.

You can also find the latest issue and back copies going back five years online on the Town Council website at ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views

But it is your magazine, so we decided to celebrate the landmark 150th issue by asking community leaders, local businesses and correspondents what they thought. This is what they said...

"Ponteland is a vibrant community and Pont News provides a vital service in informing people of local events, organisations, businesses and individual successes. Congratulations on the 150th issue and I look forward to many more."

Guy Opperman MP

"At Higgins & Winter we are huge fans of Pont News – both as readers and advertisers. As a reader it keeps us up to date with local news; as an advertiser it places us at the heart of the community. We believe in providing personalised dental care within this community so this couldn't be more important. Thanks Pont News and keep up the good work."

Kevin Higgins, Higgins & Winter Dental Practice

"Ponteland Repertory Society has had tremendous support over the years from the locally distributed Pont News & Views which gives local people a very interesting and informative read every month and has no doubt expanded audiences for amateur theatre in the village."

Lesley Eltringham, Ponteland Repertory Society

"Since arriving as Headteacher of Ponteland High School in September 2012 I have found Pont News & Views to be an essential read. It is a superb way of picking up information from across the local community. PNV has also been a wonderful advocate for schools within the Ponteland area as well as enabling our school to share many of the excellent accomplishments and experiences of our students."

Kieran McGrane, Headteacher Ponteland Community High School

"I think Pont News & Views is the lead pillar for communications in the Ponteland area. It arrives free at our doorstep every month. It is colourful, punchy, full of both news and views. It keeps everyone up to date with what is happening in our parish. At Ponteland Rotary Club we like to think we work closely with the community in Ponteland. We certainly value the support that we receive. However, if we want to get some news or update to the people of the village then Pont News & Views is our first port of call. Congratulations Pont News on achieving your 150th edition."

Alan Hall, Senior Vice-President Rotary Club of Ponteland

"Pont News & Views has been a very welcome local publication started by Chris in 2005 and it is the only publication to focus on Ponteland parish. The local newspapers also cover Ponteland, rather erratically, but over the years they have covered less and charged more and sometimes they have no contribution to make. My contribution to PNV is the result of being 'nebbly' or curious and wanting to find out more about anyone or anything, and I have contacted many people through its pages. PNV provides me with a regular platform to do this and I can share any results."

Muriel Sobo, local author and regular contributor

"There are not many publications that reach 150 editions and congratulations to PNV on reaching that milestone. I like PNV because it gets the message out about life in the Ponteland area. It strives to be unbiased and politically neutral and altogether, it is a great read about our locality."

Carl Rawlings, former Mayor of Ponteland

"I'd say that Pont News & Views reaches a wide range of people, both young and old, across urban and rural areas. Advertising in PNV has definitely helped grow my business and has proved a very cost effective way of reaching local customers as well as those from outlying areas. Congratulations on your 150th issue and best of luck going forward."

Tim Irwin, Kirkley Café & Cycles



We always welcome suggestions for improvements to the magazine – please send your ideas to Editor Chris Jennings at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or write to Pont News & Views, 16 Sunnyside Lane, Cleadon Village, SR6 7XB or call (0191) 5191306.

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Historic landmark the inspiration for new schools' trust name

A new trust which will manage six schools including a new £46m combined high, primary and leisure facility is to be named after an old Ponteland landmark.

The schools that plan to form the Multi Academy Trust have appointed its board of directors and revealed the organisation is to be called Pele Trust – a nod to Ponteland's 14th century Pele Tower.

The proposed MAT will see Ponteland High and Ponteland Primary School operate under Pele Trust along with four primary schools in the surrounding area - Darras Hall, Belsay, Heddon St Andrew's CofE and Richard Coates CofE.

The four former first schools and the middle school became primary schools last September but will see their Year 5, 6 and 7 pupils remain in their care until they can join the new-build primary and secondary site opening in 2019.

Ponteland Community Middle School is now managed by a separate trust independent of the local education authority, so will not be part of the MAT or the new-build.

Pele Trust was granted an Academy Order by the Department of Education last October and expects a decision on its conversion to Multi Academy Trust status in the summer term.

It has appointed a board of directors in preparation for becoming fully operational later this year. They are led by Chair of the Board Gerry Miller and include representatives from the education sector, business, Church of England and the local community.

Ponteland High School headteacher and spokesperson for Pele Trust, Kieran McGrane, said: "Pele Trust is effectively the business that will run

the schools and will have a dedicated finance, HR and administration team which would free up more time for headteachers and senior staff to focus on the education and care of our children.

"We are delighted at the calibre and experience of our board of directors, and look forward to their involvement in our future plans."

Guy Opperman, MP for Hexham, added: "I am delighted to support the formation of the Pele Trust, which brings together six good and outstanding schools in the Ponteland area who have chosen to join together to share their experience and expertise with the aim of further improving educational outcomes for young people in the area. I wish everyone involved the very best for the future."

Northumberland County Council recently gave the green light for the £46m scheme to house a brand-new school, leisure centre and library on the site of the old Ponteland Leisure Centre.

Work was expected to begin in late February on the site, providing the Government's National Planning Casework Unit confirmed the plans will not be called in by the Secretary of State.

Ponteland High School and Ponteland Primary School plan to move all pupils onto the site in September 2019. Darras Hall Primary School will see its new school buildings open in time for the September 2018 term and Heddon St Andrew's CofE Primary School and Belsay Primary have both had recent extensions as part of each school's building and refurbishment plans.



Pictured (front) are: Guy Opperman MP and Northumberland County Council Leader Peter Jackson with headteachers Clare Cantwell; Heather Cape; Kieran McGrane; Lynn Blain; Victoria Parr and Andrew Wheatley.



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views

Messy moles and dogs cause concern in this month's letters...

New resident's message to inconsiderate motorists and dog owners

I have recently moved to Darras Hall and while I absolutely love the area I am rather concerned as to the speed at which vehicles travel around the estate.

It is clearly marked as a 30mph limit; however there are vehicles that travel well in excess of that - not only on the two main roads of Darras Road and Middle Drive but down cul-de-sacs too.

I have two young children who regularly play outside on their bikes and scooters and it is such a shame that I am unable to let them play unsupervised as I am worried about this.

Please can motorists note the estate is subject to a 30mph limit and off the main roads a speed of 20mph should ideally be adhered to, given there are children playing. This reckless driving is spoiling our enjoyment of the estate.

I also wanted to highlight that someone is allowing their dog to foul on the path all the way from the shops at Merton Way up to the first schools. It is disgusting and not nice to have to step over and try to avoid it when walking up to the school with two children.

There are hundreds of parents and children who walk along that path and no doubt many of them have walked through this dog mess. Please can you make dog owners aware of this problem? The path is literally covered in dog dirt.

Paul Gibson
Westsyde, Darras Hall

Disgusting dog mess spoils village walks for many

Every day my wife and I walk at least once and usually twice down the North Road into Ponteland and can't believe the amount of dog mess.

After talking to other residents we have come to the conclusion it's probably the same dog responsible.

The mess doesn't end on North Road but often continues through the Blackbird car park.

Other areas of mess have been outside the Post Box restaurant and the exit from the lawn in front of the church.

The owner(s) need reminding of how disgusting this is and of the potential penalty they face.

Peter Davidson
North Road, Ponteland



Pest controllers needed to tackle park moles

I attach a picture of Ponteland Park taken this morning which is being destroyed, presumably by moles (or people who got metal detectors for Christmas).

If you could put out a request for volunteers skilled in the arcade whack-a-mole game, I'd happily provide a few mallets and video them sorting out the problem.

Steve Eglon
Western Way, Darras Hall

April issue deadlines: Delivery of the April issue will start on Wednesday March 28th and be completed by Thursday April 5th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Wednesday March 14th. If you are aware of any missed properties please contact the editor at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or call (0191) 5191306. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the April 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...

Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight events in Ponteland continue with a Fairtrade Coffee Morning in Merton Hall from 9.30am to 11.30am on Friday March 2nd and 'Big Brew' in St Matthew's Hall from 10am to 12noon on Saturday March 10th.

Women's World Day of Prayer Service

The Women's World Day of Prayer Service will be held in St Matthew's RC Church on the West Road on Friday March 2nd at 2.30pm. Everyone is most welcome to attend and there will be refreshments in the hall afterwards.

Ponteland Means Business

Ponteland Means Business meets at the Diamond Inn from 8am to 9.30am on the first Tuesday of each month. Next meeting March 6th. Contact Brian Russell at brian.russell@profitabilitygroup.co.uk or on (01661) 872004.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

At our meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday March 6th in St Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Atholl Swanson will give a talk about 'The River Coquet from Source to Mouth'. Admission £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

Ponteland U3A

Our meeting at 2pm on March 7th in St. Mary's Church Hall will feature talk 'Railways to Ponteland, Darras Hall and beyond' by Keith Stewart. Visitors are always welcome - no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland or call (01661) 824953.

Kirkley WI

Our guest speaker at 7pm on Wednesday March 7th in the Oak Room at Kirkley Hall will be Bill Devonshire, who will talk about 'Gems of British gardens'. Guests welcome. Visit kirkleywi.wordpress.com

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

On Wednesday March 7th we have our annual dinner and ladies' night and at 2.30pm on Monday March 12th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Barry Mead will talk about 'Archeological Digs I Have Been On'.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday March 12th at 7.30pm we welcome Prof John Richards talking on 'Greece Bulbs Spring and Autumn' at Ponteland Social Club. Visitors £2. Email neegroup@agsgroups.org or visit alpinegardensociety.net/groups/North-East-England or find us on Facebook.

Ponteland WI

Our speaker at 7pm on March 13th in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall is Barry Mead with a talk and slide show 'Whitley Bay in old picture postcards'. Visitors welcome.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday March 13th we are welcoming Gwen Keating, a Newcastle Walking Tours by Green Badge Tourist Guide, NewcastleGateshead. We meet on the second Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Contact us via email at pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or via our Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

Members of the public are welcomed to our monthly talks at Kirkley Hall. On Wednesday March 14th at 2pm Mark Robson discusses Bide-a-Wee Cottage Gardens and Nursery. On Wednesday April 11th Lorna Tingey talks on waste recycling. Cost: members £4 and non-members £5.

Ponteland Lions Club

Our monthly business meeting is at 7.30pm on Wednesday March 14th in Merton Hall and our social meeting is a charity fund meal in the New Rendezvous restaurant on Monday March 26th. The Charity Fund bookstall and spectacles collection is at Waitrose on Saturday March 31st.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Our next meeting is at 7pm on March 20th in the Memorial Hall with the AGM for members only, followed at 7.30pm by Vanessa Wellock from Ilkley who will demonstrate on the theme of 'Fabulous'. All welcome; fee for non-members £7.

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 March 21st. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirley@reevehill.plus.com

Methodist Church Spring Concert

Ponteland Methodist Church is holding a Spring Concert on Saturday March 24th at 7pm. This year Graeme and Valerie Danby will be joined by Voces University of Cumbria. Light refreshments after the concert. Tickets costing £7 are available from Syd Cowan at syd.cowan@btinternet.com or on (01661) 824459 and can be reserved and paid for at the door.

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday March 26th we have large scale planning with Victoria McLeod and on Monday April 23rd embroidered clock (advanced booking required) Anne Hefford - both from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall. All welcome - cost £4. Contact Secretary Penny Ford at penelopeford636@btinternet.com or (01670) 788278.

Ponteland Civic Society

Our next meeting will be held on Monday March 26th at 7.30pm at Ponteland CIU Club (on Merton Way). This is our AGM and will be followed by Mike Duffy who will speak on some of the many aspects of Durham Cathedral. Visitors welcome - cost £2.

Ponteland URC Charity Concert

Ponteland URC is hosting a Charity Concert on Friday April 22nd in aid of Labentara Village, Kenya, featuring popular Scottish folk duo The Quiggs and NE accordion champion Leonard Brown. Tickets costing £8 from Geoff Steven Opticians, Ponteland Social Club or by calling (01661) 824243.

Ponteland Ramblers

The Ponteland group of the Ramblers Association organises group walks in Northumberland and North Durham on alternate Sundays and two Wednesdays a month. Sunday walks are between seven and nine miles and always involve a stop for a picnic lunch. Wednesday walks are usually five to seven miles and sometimes offer the option of a pub lunch after the walk. For more information visit ramblers.org.uk/ponteland or contact Steve Edwards on (01661) 886310.

Ponteland Photographic Society

Ponteland Photographic Society meets at Merton Hall at 7.30pm every Monday in March. New members welcome. See pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk

Ponteland Tuesday Bridge Club

We meet every Tuesday from 7pm to 10pm September to April to play Acol Bridge in the upstairs room of the Memorial Hall. Beginners to experienced welcome. Contact Mary Oldfield on (01661) 821769.

Such love: the power of the cross



By Rev'd Captain Paul Allinson, Vicar of Ponteland

As a child I remember coming across crosses. The first occasion I remember well is when I would receive schoolwork back from the teacher noting alongside the ticks in green ink were crosses in red indicating all the answers I had got wrong...

The second occasion was the cross my dad would put on his 'Spot the Ball' form in an attempt to win a cash prize, or my cross on the Treasure Island trying to do the same. Finally, I remember the crosses on letters or cards I either sent or received indicating a mark of love.

On Good Friday we remember a cross † that reminds us of the wrongs we commit and also the treasure of forgiveness we are offered and the love God shows for us.

This cross stands for all time as an offer of a new beginning as wrongs are righted, treasure is found and unconditional love is offered. This cross of tragedy became on Easter Day a cross of victory and the crown of thorns a crown of glory.

Come with us with Christ during Holy Week and Easter on the Way of the Cross.

Surrexit Christus Alleluia! Happy Easter.



Churches together in Ponteland

The Ponteland churches wish you a peaceful and joyous Easter

United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall

Palm Sunday Service March 25th, 10am

Good Friday Service March 30th, 10am

Easter Sunday Communion
April 1st, 10am

St. Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

Palm Sunday March 25th

Holy Communion, 8am

All Age Eucharist, 10am

Evening Prayer, 6.30pm

Holy Monday to Holy Wednesday
March 26th to 28th

Compline and Reflection 7pm

Holy Wednesday March 28th -
Holy Communion, 10am

Maundy Thursday March 29th

Choral Communion, 7pm

Followed by a Vigil with Compline, 9pm

Good Friday March 30th

Reflections on the Cross, 10.30am

Holy Saturday March 31st

Easter Liturgy with renewal
of Baptismal vows, 7pm

Easter Sunday April 1st

Holy Communion, 8am

Parish Eucharist, 10am

Easter Songs of Praise, 6.30pm

Methodist Church, Ponteland

Parade Service March 25th, 10am

Maundy Thursday March 29th -
Upper Room Communion, 7pm

Good Friday Service March 30th, 10am

Easter Sunday April 1st

Communion, 10am

Evening Worship, 6.30pm

Methodist Church, Milbourn

Good Friday Service March 30th, 7pm

Easter Sunday April 1st Holy
Communion, 6.30pm

St Matthew's R.C., Ponteland

Good Friday Passion March 30th, 3pm

Holy Saturday March 31st
Easter Vigil, 5pm

Easter Sunday April 1st Mass, 10.30am

Holy Saviour, Milbourn

Palm Sunday March 25th Morning
Prayer, 11.15am

Easter Sunday April 1st
Holy Communion, 11.15am

St Francis Xavier, Cheeseburn

Palm Sunday March 25th Holy Mass,
8.30am

Easter Sunday April
1st Holy Mass, 8.30am

Coates Green, Ponteland

Good Friday March 30th, 11.15am

Raising of the Cross

Refreshments in the Methodist Hall after
the service.

You are warmly invited to these services



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HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Highways Working Party met on January 12th and a proposal was agreed to use recycled green plastic picket fencing as a boundary treatment for the new Merton Way car park scheme being carried out later this year. The Council also agreed a HWP suggestion to request the County Council consider installing yellow hatching on the mini roundabout at the North Road/A696 junction, following complaints about motorists blocking the roundabout and making it difficult to turn right onto the A696. The Council also considered a suggestion to rename the housing estate located off Thornhill Road as it was felt it should have its own identity. The signage will be funded by the Town Council, however the County Council advised a public consultation exercise should be carried out with the residents in this area. Costs for a consultation will be obtained by the Clerk before a decision was made whether to proceed.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

County councillor Veronica Jones reported that the budget was due to be agreed by the County Council on February 21st. There is currently a gap of £64m in funding and ways to resolve this were currently being examined. The capital programme will be reduced to make savings of £30m for the revenue budget. More information is on the NCC website at northumberland.gov.uk. Resurfacing works have been agreed at the top of Middle Drive. Coun Jones also reported she had met with officers and the owner of the Broadway shops following complaints about litter behind the shops. She said problems in Medburn continued to be a cause for concern, particularly the issue of the private road at The Avenue and the current situation with ongoing developments.

EASTER TREASURE HUNT – SATURDAY MARCH 31ST

The Council is holding an Easter Treasure Hunt on Easter Saturday March 31st at 11am, starting at the main Park entrance near to Waitrose. See information on page 21.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Council approved the annual grant application from Darras Hall Estate Committee for £600 towards the upkeep of the bridlepath and also agreed to release some of the grant for NCC's Youth Service to provide outreach work in Ponteland on Friday and Saturday evenings. This is on a trial basis for one month, followed by a review of effectiveness before a decision on extending the activity.

LOCATION OF AIRFIELDS OF BRITAIN CONSERVATION TRUST PLAQUE

The Council considered various locations for the siting of the above plaque. The first choice was on the grassed bank area outside of Merton Hall. Councillors felt this was a highly visible location in the centre of Ponteland. The Clerk was asked to seek the necessary permissions to progress this installation. If this was not possible the Council agreed that the reserve areas were on the wall near to the rockery on Main Street as second choice and in the Park near to the Rotary Yew tree as their third option.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

Councillors agreed to delegate the organisation of suitable training on the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) being brought into effect from May 25th to the Clerk, who will report back to councillors. The new regs will have an impact on all parish and town councils and small organisations who hold personal data. All need to register with the Information Commissioners Office and appoint a Data Protection Officer. More information can be found on the ICO website at ico.org.uk

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

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Volunteers spruce up bridleway at tree planting day

A group of volunteers spent the morning planting 100 trees in the latest stage of the project to spruce up the old railway line from Rotary Way towards the Airport.

They also took part in litter picking and hand pruning along the bridleway. The work will allow extra cover to help the wildlife secure food in the form of seeds and berries and cover for nesting later in the spring and years to come.

The 35 volunteers who took part represented U3A, Friends of Ponteland Park, Ponteland Town Council's Footpath Users Group, Ponteland Community Partnership, Ponteland Greenbelt Group, Ponteland Lions, residents, 733 (Newcastle Airport) Air Cadets, Scouts and Scout Explorers.

Northumberland County Council supplied the trees and later in the year will install perch benches to be positioned alongside the three educational interpretation pedestals which show local heritage along the route towards the Airport – along with the two already positioned at Callerton Lane and Rotary Way.

Each pedestal shows our local heritage, how the area depended on the existence of the railway and the surrounding natural environment. The first shows



where the ICI Explosives Depot was located, the second shows the historical Prestwick Colliery daily life, while the third shows the original Woolsington Airfield.

The project was supported by the land owner Ward Bros, and the Community Partnership accessed funding for the educational pedestals from the Community Foundation - Local

Environment Action Fund. Support also came from NCC's Countryside Officer.

By the end of March the side skimming of the pathway and hard core reinstatement work will be undertaken by Ward Bros and around early April the three perch benches will be installed at the side of the educational pedestals. Once completed wild flowers will be planted later this spring.



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Club runs recruitment drive

A local running club which has seen its membership rise seven-fold in six years has launched a fresh recruitment drive.

Ponteland Runners, which launched in 2005, has seen a membership of just 20 in 2012 increase to more than 140 and is on the lookout for even more new recruits.

Club chairman David Buffham said: "The club has groups for all abilities, including a regular beginners' course based on the proven 'Couch to 5K' programme.

"We pride ourselves on a friendly atmosphere and it is the role of the club's ambassadors, working alongside everyone else in the club, to ensure a warm welcome for newcomers of all abilities.

"So, whether you are a lapsed club runner, someone who has always run alone or someone who wants to get into running for the first time we think we have just the thing for you. And right on your doorstep."

A no-commitment taster evening, when would-be runners can give the club a try, is being held at 7pm on Wednesday March 28th, with the meeting point at Ponteland Leisure Centre car park.

A similar event last year saw 93 people attend and organisers are hoping for similar success. There is no cost involved and those coming can join any of the running groups based on their pace, and including a walk/jog group.

Everyone - from people who can walk about three miles at a reasonable pace to seasoned runners - is welcomed. All that is needed is a pair of running or training shoes.

To find out more email chairman@pontelandrunners.org.uk, call David Buffham on (01661) 820780 or look up Ponteland Runners on Facebook.

New members sought for footpath watchdog

New members are being sought to join a group which helps maintain the area's footpaths.

The Town Council's Footpath Committee meets twice each year at the council office to plan with the County Council's Countryside Officer a series of walks to identify any problems. These can include broken or missing footpath signs or way markers and defective stiles or gates.

The committee then submits a short report to the Town Council Clerk and remedial works are actioned (funds permitting) by the Countryside Officer. Opportunities are available, after suitable training, for members to become involved in the restoration of the path/stile/signs for the benefit of the community.

Anyone interested in joining the Footpath Committee should email enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk or call (01661) 825092.

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Free activities and advice guide for over-50s published

A free guide which lists groups and activities and contacts for advice on health, care and financial issues in Northumberland has been published.

The 2018 Golden Guide for Over 50s contains details on local activities, clubs, social and networks, and carries a wealth of contacts for finding expert help with health, care, community and money problems.

You can find new things to do like walking, wildlife and gardening groups, take up woodwork, singing or sport, or make extra cash by starting a business—as many over 50s now do.

There is information on befriending schemes, dementia and mental health support, plus help tracing lost money, or claiming your pension or other entitlements.

Also included is the How to Retire in Northumberland feature. If you're

about to retire or already have, find helpful hints about enjoying it, from planning your finances to making the most of your time.

Copies are available from: libraries; Northumbria Healthcare Care teams; Age UK; Women's Institute branches; Carers' Northumberland; Healthwatch; Royal Voluntary Service; Alzheimer's Society; British Red Cross; Citizens Advice; Golden Age Forum; Practice Nurses and Care Navigators in GP surgeries; and selected Boots pharmacies.

If you can't get out or can't find a copy the full edition is online at goldenguide.org.uk or if you ring Age UK Northumberland on (01670) 784821 and they will post one out to you free.



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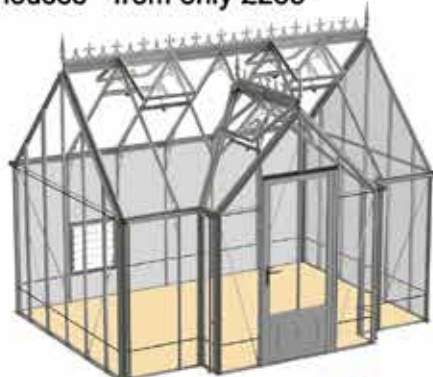
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The first building on the site, which was located near the former Ponteland railway station, was a wooden hut used as a reading room before the current facility was built.

Today Merton Hall Recreation Centre, a registered charity run in the interests of social welfare, still has a popular reading room with an extensive library containing more than 500 books.

But it has so many other community uses. In the event of a flood in Ponteland, the venue is registered as an Emergency Evacuation Centre.

It stages numerous events, including fashion shows, Christmas fayres, and the weekly country market held each Friday from March to December selling home-made food, home grown plants, hand-knitted garments and jewellery. Brunch & Bingo, held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, is also growing in popularity.

The hall is hired by a wide range of organisations and clubs including: art; bridge; wine tasting; cyclists; photography; WI; Lions;

political groups; slimmers; floral; triathlon; U3A; Ageing Well; Carers Northumberland; and Social Eyes for the visually impaired. All of the groups welcome new members.

Rooms can be hired for the morning, afternoon and evening from only £6 per hour for Ponteland residents for weekly bookings. The morning refreshments are another huge draw – tea and coffee is served Monday to Friday from 9am to 11.30am at only 30 pence per cup.

The low costs for room hire and refreshments are only made possible by the hall, which also boasts free Wifi, being staffed by volunteers. More volunteers are welcome to work in the hall.

If you are looking for a warm and welcoming place to meet old friends and make new ones, or to set up or host a group, Merton Hall is an ideal venue – and ideas for new uses are welcomed.

A Fairtrade coffee morning is being held on Friday March 2nd from 9.30am to 11.30am - why not come in and have a look around?



Contact Merton Hall (email preferred)

Email: mertonhall123@gmail.com

Tel: 01661 872917

Find us on Facebook: facebook.com/mertonhall123



Free Easter treasure trail in the park

Children and their parents are invited to a free Easter treasure trail in Ponteland Park on Easter Saturday.

It is the third year the event, first launched as part of the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations in the village, has been held.

More than 100 youngsters and parents attended last year's trail, organised

by Ponteland Town Councillors Sue Johnson and Christine Caisley.

Children aged up to 13 years and their parents who want to take part should meet at the Main Street entrance to the park by Waitrose at 11am on Saturday March 31st.

All entrants will receive a free Easter egg.

Children enjoy last year's event.



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Ponteland Community High School Report

Primary pupils enjoy a taste of high school life

Children enjoyed a taste of life in the 'big school' as they tried everything from cookery to chemistry at a visit to Ponteland High School.

Year 5 pupils from seven primary schools spent the day at the high school as part of the preparations for their move up to the new 11-18 school due to open in September 2019.

Darras Hall, Ponteland, Richard Coates, Heddon, Whalton, Stamfordham and Belsay primary schools all took part in the taster days.

Over two days the children were given an experience of a typical high school day with a range of lessons including maths, English, science, food technology, German and art. Mixed groups offered the opportunity for youngsters from different schools to cement new friendships.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said feedback from the primary schools had been very positive: "Days such as these are crucial in easing the move from primary to secondary school. Even though these children will move to a different school building, what we are doing now is introducing them to their future teachers, clarifying the expectations we

have and how our school and lessons operate.

"This means that our future students will be ideally placed to make the transition without any fear or worry. I am very grateful to our staff for their work in preparing these sessions as all of these activities take place on top of their regular teaching commitment but I know that they have enjoyed it just as much as the Year 5 pupils did."

More photos of the two-day visit can be seen on the Darras Hall Primary School website: darrashallprimary.com/our-day-at-the-high-school

Name of new multi academy trust revealed: p8



Ponteland Rotary open evening

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

We plan to hold an informal evening for anyone to come along to learn more about Rotary. The evening will seek to explain what we do at Ponteland Rotary and how easy it could be for you to become involved. The event will take place at 7pm on Tuesday March 13th at Ponteland Golf Club.

Why not get in touch with an existing Ponteland Rotary Club member? You can contact Suzanne Marshall or Alan Hall. As members of Ponteland Rotary, they will be able to explain what the Club does, how you could become involved and what is planned to happen on the evening of Tuesday March 13th. Suzanne can be contacted on (01661) 824454 and Alan on (01661) 860284.

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

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

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Lions fund lifesaving device in Merton Way

By Andy Anderson, Secretary of Ponteland Lions Club

A potentially lifesaving device funded by Ponteland Lions has been installed in the town centre.

Anyone needing to use the defibrillator, located on the wall of Ponteland Social Club in Merton Way, should phone 999 and they will be given the code to unlock the cabinet.

No training is required to use the defibrillator as it tells the user what to do, but it is hoped to run a short training session for local businesses.

The Lions Club is planning to install similar devices at Broadway in Darras Hall and the Methodist Church. If you would like to help the Lions raise the money for the other defibrillators, please contact us on 0845 833 9913.



Mayor of Ponteland Alan Varley and President of Ponteland Lions Geoff Lisle are pictured with the new defibrillator.

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New service promises to be a breath of fresh air for the elderly

A Ponteland project manager hopes her latest scheme will be a breath of fresh air for local pensioners.

For Katie Wilkinson has joined forces with Lesley Heseltine and Tim Parsons to launch a pioneering service which offers free open air transport for the elderly.

The trio are currently fundraising to set up a NE England chapter for Cycling Without Age, a not for profit organisation started in 2012 in Copenhagen by Ole Kassow which aims to tackle social isolation faced by older people due to limited mobility.

CWA volunteers use a bespoke bicycle called a trishaw to take older people in care homes and those living on their own out on bike rides around their local area. The three-wheeled cycles have a two-seat passenger cab out front and electrical power assist for volunteer cycle pilots, and are ridden slowly to enable interaction between the rider(s), pilot and general public along the route.

Cycling Without Age has taken off, and there are now 450 chapters in 33 countries across the world with more than 10,000 trained cycle pilots riding 1,500 trishaws. More than 50,000 elderly people have benefited, with the oldest 106 years young! The organisation was recently featured on BBC Three's 'Amazing Humans'.

Katie, 28, from Eland Mews, said: "I viewed a video of Ole Kassow and was immediately inspired to bring this initiative to the North East. Last August I signed up to become an affiliate and a few weeks later Lesley was put in touch with me via CWA and Tim, a keen cyclist who lives along the street to Lesley, joined us.

"We are building relationships with care homes and managing a scheme of local volunteers to take elderly people on bike rides out of their homes and back into their communities."

Each trishaw costs around £6,000 each, including the blanket and rain hood, and the trio are appealing for donations to fund their first two vehicles. They have been holding events

including a recent bake sale hosted by The Dept for Ageing and Vitality at Newcastle Uni, and have a Crowdfunding page.

To find out more or to donate email cwanewcastle@gmail.com or visit crowdfunder.co.uk/cycling-without-age-newcastle-upon-tyne before March 19th.

Katie is pictured with Lesley, Tim and passenger Bill Ewing in trishaw 'Annie'. Photo by Dave Bell, Some See Different.

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Construction on track for September opening at Darras Hall school

Construction of the new Darras Hall Primary School is on track for its opening in September, developers have announced.

This is the final school of six which are being redeveloped by North East architectural practice Howarth Litchfield as part of a £50m reorganisation of schools in the Ponteland area by Northumberland County Council.

The practice was appointed by the council's project managers Faithful and Gould to provide both architectural and interior design services on five first school projects at Heddon-on-the-Wall, Whalton, Belsay and Stamfordham and a first and middle school in Ponteland.

The work has included extending, remodelling and refurbishing St Andrews at Heddon-on-the-Wall, Whalton First School, Belsay First School, Stamfordham Village First School, Ponteland First School and Richard Coates Middle School. Work on these schools began at the start of 2017 and has now concluded.

The investment by NCC is supporting the transition from a three-tier to a two-tier system, enabling the schools to accommodate Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in the existing first schools and nursery and Year 3 children in Richard Coates.

Following the completion of the new build for Darras Hall Primary School, a second phase will involve the demolition of half of the existing school for the creation of playing fields and multi-use games areas. The remaining half of the former school will be demolished in 2020. The principal contractor is Galliford Try.

Howarth Litchfield's director leading the projects, Elisa Berry, said the investment would "greatly improve the schools, making them fit for purpose so that they function more efficiently as they cater for an increase in pupil numbers, while at the same time providing the local authority with value for money".

Coun Wayne Daley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services at NCC, added: "Providing an excellent learning environment and helping to deliver the best possible education for children across Northumberland is a priority for us. The development at Darras Hall Primary will allow us to provide a fresh and modern learning space for pupils to thrive in."

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Ponteland gets second Britain in Bloom call-up

Ponteland will once again be representing the region in Britain in Bloom this year.

We have been selected to represent Northumbria in the small town category in the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom UK Finals 2018, alongside Morpeth (town), Durham (small city) and Tanfield (village).

Ponteland secured a silver gilt award in the 'small towns' category in Britain in Bloom last year – a great result for a first-time entry. This followed five consecutive gold awards in the 'small towns' category in Northumbria in Bloom.

RHS judges will once again visit in August to judge the standard of floral displays and the general cleanliness of Ponteland and

Darras Hall, compared to 75 other Britain in Bloom finalists.

Coun Alan Varley, Mayor of Ponteland Town Council, said: "We are delighted Ponteland has been selected for a second year running to enter this competition and hope that the many businesses, organisations and individuals who gave us so much support in 2017 will continue to assist this year."

The Town Council hopes to involve residents, businesses and organisation in this year's entry. If you would like to get involved please contact the Clerk to the Council Kath Mavin at enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk or ring (01661) 825092.

Church marks 750th anniversary with year of celebrations

By Revd Captain Paul T Allinson

St. Mary the Virgin in Ponteland has announced a year-long celebration to mark the 750th anniversary of its link to patron Merton College, Oxford.

A series of events are being held throughout 2018 including concerts, visits and a summer flower festival.

Musical events are planned for most months, including a visit by Merton College Girls' Choir in August.

A three day flower festival is being held in the church from July 27th to 30th.

Events being held in March include flower festival fundraising at Fratelli's on March 12th and a concert by Hartlepool Choir on March 24th.

For full details of the events see the church website at: pontelandstmary.co.uk

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TREATMENTS

Bring in this advert and receive a **10%** discount off your first treatment.



theguild
of Nail Technicians

theguild
of Beauty Therapists

hb Opticians
Beauty & Podiatry

We aspire to be innovators in the Beauty industry. Fashions and styles come and go. We intend to be here through them all, giving you the warm, personal attention you deserve. If you need a massage after a long, hard day or are ready to treat yourself to a total body treatment, we offer you a comfortable atmosphere and a staff that's dedicated to serving you with a complete range of therapeutic treatments.

sunjunkie
love your skin

brow
by *mi*

JESSICA

ELEMIS

tel: 01661 820008 | email: Info@hb-opticians.co.uk
hb Opticians 29 Broadway, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9PW.



MOUTHWATERING MARCH AT HAVELI

Winner
Diners' Choice
Awards

TheJournal
Secret Diner Asian Restaurant of the Year



March is full of celebrations and long weekends. So whether you want to treat your Mum on Mother's Day, celebrate St Patrick's Day with a Guinness, or kick-start your Bank Holiday Easter weekend...Haveli is the place to be...

Enjoy amazing starters like our Coronation Chicken Tikka. Chicken marinated in spiced yoghurt, tandoor roasted and served with curried mayonnaise with raisins; delicious.

Follow that with one of our amazing curries such as the ever popular Railway Lamb Curry. Leg of Northumbrian lamb cooked in a tomato and coconut based sauce with new potato and curry leaf. Yummy!

Finish your evening with a selection of our delicious signature desserts. There's no need to cut your night short, stay a while and enjoy our fully stocked bar. Haveli is licensed until midnight.

Need a quiet night in? Enjoy restaurant quality food in the comfort of your own home with our home delivery service.



EASTER IS ON ITS WAY - DON'T DELAY AND BOOK TODAY

3-5 Broadway, Darras Hall | **01661 87 27 27** | haveliponteland.com