

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



War of words as D-day looms
for 2,000-home plans

Campaign launched to curb
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Triple housing blow for
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Families and four legged friends enjoy festival

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Families and their four legged friends enjoy festival

Families and their four legged friends enjoyed a host of attractions at Kirkley Hall's Countryside Festival.

Thousands of people from all over the region descended on the 190-acre seventeenth century rural estate on Sunday May 13th for the popular annual event.

There they enjoyed everything from helicopter rides to clay pigeon shooting, a dog agility show, high ropes, pony rides and a show jumping event.

For the less energetic there were also plant sales, stalls, a range of food and refreshments available and woodland walks. Kirkley Hall Zoological Gardens, which boasts over 200 species of animals, reptiles and birds, was also open.

For information about land based courses at the Northumberland College campus, visit kirkley.ac.uk

Cover shot and p3 photos by The Image Farm.

Excellent response to crime prevention kits initiative



By PC Ingrid Clayton, Ponteland Neighbourhood Policing Team

We have two new officers joining the team - PC Darren English and PCSO Gemma Lathan - who will be looking after Ponteland and the surrounding area.

Both officers come with a wealth of experience and are looking forward to meeting you all.

Last month I discussed ways of securing your property using SelectaDNA. I have had an excellent response to this article and I have managed to provide a number of residents with kits in the hope that this will help prevent crime. I still have a number of kits to deliver, therefore I appreciate your patience.

We are continuing to keep our roads safe in the area with the excellent work and support from our community speedwatch team.

The Neighbourhood Policing team also joined forces with HMRC and DVSA (Driving & Vehicle Standards Agency) for an operation in Ponteland and the surrounding area to combat rural crime and travelling criminals, as well as checking for any vehicle defects.

In total 19 vehicles were stopped and checked, with seven drivers issued prohibition/warning notices for vehicle defects.

To check crime figures where you live please visit the website

northumbria.police.uk/crime_mapping where you can find details on reported offences right down to street level.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me at ingrid.clayton.109@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

If you need to report an incident or a crime please telephone 101 for non emergency or 999 in an emergency.

CYCLIST CRACKDOWN CONSIDERED AFTER PARK ACCIDENT

The Town Council was concerned to hear of an accident involving a cyclist and a dog on the path through from Waitrose to the Memorial Hall car park.

The dog has been seriously injured and is undergoing major surgery at significant cost and distress to the owners.

The Council is considering the use of cyclists dismount signs on this path as it is a well-used area by pedestrians and dog owners and it is hoped that accidents such as this most recent one can be avoided.

GUY OPPERMAN MP

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Guy Opperman, your local Member of Parliament, holds regular surgeries across the constituency. If you would like to arrange an appointment to discuss an issue of concern to you, please get in touch with Guy using the details below.

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I N D E P E N D E N T



Leader gives verdict on first year in power

A year ago newly elected Northumberland County Council leader Peter Jackson set out an ambitious plan to roll out a manifesto which swept the Conservatives into power at County Hall for the first time in more than 45 years. But has he delivered on his pledges? Chris Jennings reports.

Halting the County Hall move, halting the march of the developers, a war on potholes, scrapping post-16 travel charges. Just some of the promises made to voters at last May's local elections by Conservative candidates.

With work already underway on the new proposed council headquarters in Ashington, and major planning applications on green belt land including Dissington Garden Village near Ponteland given approval in principle by the previous Labour-led administration, there were huge question marks over whether some of the promises were deliverable.

Coun Jackson, a Ponteland county councillor, has required thick skin in recent weeks, coming under heavy fire from one major developer unhappy about the new zero tolerance approach to green belt development.

But he remains determined to press ahead with huge changes to the strategic direction of the authority. So how does he rate the new administration's performance in its first year in power?

Coun Jackson said: "We started as we meant to go on as an administration, so one of the first things that we did was give back some key decision-making to local areas and local communities through the creation of the local area councils. The main example is local planning decisions are now determined by locally elected councillors.

"I think that's introduced a much more thoughtful and locally responsive planning system that's had an immediate impact in terms of planning decisions."

A tick for the 'Local People, Local Decisions' pledge. But what progress has been made on the other promises?

Halting the County Hall move

Progress: Work starts at the end of May on a £17m three year programme to refurbish the council hq. The external refurbishment of the 35-year-old building will include a new roof, repointing and painting. This will be followed by an internal refurbishment with a more modern open plan style to create a better working environment for staff. Plans are underway to create a leisure and retail hub on the Portland Park site originally earmarked for the new council hq.

"(The internal refurbishment) will also save significant amounts of space within this building and the aim is to free up a whole wing of the building so we can offer it for rent for high-level businesses.

"What we are doing with Ashington in particular is creating a new retail investment on that development site which will resurrect and regenerate the centre of that town, as well as creating hundreds of new jobs for that community."

Halt the march of the developers

Progress: The former Core Strategy was withdrawn last summer and a new Local Plan is being developed which will be completed by summer 2020. The move led to a threat of Government intervention in November due to the delay in implementing the strategic planning blueprint and this remains a possibility. There are currently 1,400 new homes being built per year and 19,000 existing consents, with a six-and-a-half year housing land supply. The 2000-home Dissington Garden Village planning application is being redetermined in June.

"What we are doing now is building up a new local plan... which will be valid for the next 20 years and will be based on the most up-to-date population and housing projection figures. It will be soundly based, has been properly resourced and is actually being produced in record time.

"It will be out for consultation this summer so residents across Northumberland will very soon see what the differences are and it is our very strong feeling that there should be no building on designated green belt and the current indications are that is not necessary and never was necessary.

"In the last year of the Labour run council there were over ten thousand housing consents given by the planning department of Northumberland County Council. In our first year as an administration, that number has dropped dramatically to around 2,500 for the whole county.

"We will not tolerate any developer large or small concreting over our county where it's not absolutely necessary and we're determined to protect our communities and our green spaces. Even in the face of difficulties and provocation from bully boy developers we will stand firm for our communities. We have stopped acting as a council that is the developer's friend.

"We were actually shocked and surprised to find out as an administration exactly how many consented applications there already are Northumberland. There are 19,000 consented applications in Northumberland that haven't been built yet.

"That very fact gives us the confidence to say that there should be no building on green belt."

War on potholes

Progress: About a quarter of the £100m pledged to repair roads has been spent, aided by a £1.8m grant from central Government received after lobbying for additional funds. But efforts have been hampered by the 'Beast from the East' which has led to a threefold increase in the number of reported potholes to around 22,000 in the last year.

"We are changing the way that the council repairs potholes so they're fixed on a more permanent basis than has been in the past. Gradually we hope to be able to improve the condition of the roads over the next three or four years."

Scrapping post-16 travel charge

Progress: The council has spent £2.2m on scrapping the £600 annual charge levied on post-16 students, who live more than three miles from school/college and cannot access a viable public transport network, for them to travel on school buses or taxis contracted by the council. The current administration vowed to abolish charges for students meeting the eligibility criteria, with a one-off £50 fee being introduced to help cover costs. This starts from September, the first opportunity for launch due to a statutory consultation process.

"We've scrapped post-16 transport charges and that has the result for many hard-working families right across the county of saving them £600 a year."




Future plans

"We're committed to the biggest capital spending in the council's history of nearly £600m over the next three years on a range of schemes that will actually regenerate our communities right across the county and provide the platform for a new future for a great Northumberland.

"So we are building new schools where they're needed, we are seriously investing in extra car parking where there are proven congestion problems. And we are starting to regenerate towns right across Northumberland that have been neglected for many, many years.

"We think that the county council is starting to become an engine for change for a better Northumberland."

What do you think? Give your verdict on the county council's performance by writing to Your Letters at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk



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War of words as developer and council exchange insults over 2,000-home scheme

A war of words has broken out between a developer and Northumberland County Council after confirmation a planning application for 2,000 homes near Ponteland was being redetermined next month.

Directors at Lugano Developments and county council leaders have exchanged insults publicly as it became clear the once positive working relationship between the firm and local authority has soured.

On May 10th NCC advised Newcastle-based Lugano that their plans for Dissington Garden Village, which had been supported under the previous Labour-led administration and were awaiting submission to the National Planning Casework Unit for a call-in decision, were being referred back to the council's Strategic Planning Committee.

The move follows a major change of direction by the council on green belt development (see p6-7) since the Conservatives took control last year.

The notification was met with a furious eight page complaint from Lugano the following day, copied to all county councillors, which accused senior politicians and officers of underhand tactics to bring about a u-turn in the 'minded to grant planning permission' decision made in March 2017.

Allegations, which the council has strenuously denied, included claims pressure had been put on senior planning officials within the authority to scrap the Core Strategy (the long

term strategic planning blueprint for the county) and reverse the Dissington Garden Village decision.

Lugano alleges it has secured evidence including documentation obtained via a Freedom of Information request that there was an attempt to "unlawfully influence the statutory planning process" with cajoling, bullying and threats towards a senior officer who has since left the authority.

Lugano said they had written to the Secretary of State asking him to intervene and were reporting the matter to the Crown Prosecution Service.

The letter from Executive Chairman Richard Robson and Director Allan Rankin to the council's Monitoring Officer concludes: "Regrettably the contents of this letter describe a pattern of behaviour in public office of the worst possible kind.

"Behaviour that has as its target the destruction of an exemplar development scheme that ironically has the official support of NCC as its partner. Accordingly, NCC must instigate forthwith a full third party independent enquiry into their actions, with a mandate to make public the enquiry's findings."

A council spokesperson responded to the claims: "We are appalled and quite frankly astounded that the applicant (Lugano Developments) has chosen to make public such serious allegations in an open letter.

"The allegations are very serious in nature and the council believes that it would be inappropriate at this time to address publicly the many inappropriate,

untrue and defamatory statements which are contained within the letter. The council is taking legal advice in this regard.

"The council can confirm that the process which it is following is lawful and reasonable, and it has been fully open with the applicant regarding all aspects of this."

Council Leader Peter Jackson, rubbishing the allegations as "tittle tattle" added: "To attack individual officers and individual councillors on the basis of flimsy, unfounded allegations is absolutely disgraceful.

"Lugano are clearly trying to subvert the normal planning process and we were elected as an administration to stop the march of the developers, and to protect their valued green belt and that's what we're doing and we won't be deflected by any bully boy threats."

Coun Grant Davey, leader of the Labour group, said: "Lugano's allegations are serious and are backed up with evidence. The call for an independent, third-party investigation into actions at this council has also been made by two local MPs, myself as Labour group leader and by former members of the authority.

"A spotlight needs to be shone on the decisions since last May and they need to be addressed not dismissed. The Lugano allegations may turn out to be the tip of a very shocking iceberg."

The planning application is due to go back before the Strategic Planning Committee on June 19th.

War of words: a visual of the Garden Village at the centre of the dispute

Middle school expansion bid resubmitted

A formal bid for approval for an expansion of Ponteland Middle School to allow pupils to stay on until the age of 16 has been resubmitted to the Government.

The submission to Lord Agnew, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System, is being accompanied by reviewed accommodation plans, budgets and the curriculum preparations for the extra students.

It also examines ways to reduce any contention for the scheme, with alternative funding sources being looked at to support the school's extension.

If successful, the school would receive its first Year 9 intake in September 2019, then the initial Year 10 intake in 2020 and the first Year 11 intake in 2021.

The decision to apply to extend follows the signal from the neighbouring High School that it will not be in a position to guarantee places at Year 9 for all pupils who join the middle school academy at Year 5, following the three-tier route.

Following the education restructure, parents in Ponteland are now in the unusual position of having the choice of two or three tier education due to the new hybrid system following the middle school's successful application last year to become an academy to avoid closure.

The academy's recent consultation on extension was overwhelmingly supported by parents and staff. The school sent the consultation to all stakeholders, schools and the local councils. Objections were received from Ponteland High

School, the Ponteland primary schools, Newcastle City Council and several primary schools in the Newcastle area.

Northumberland County Council remained neutral and there were no objections from parents or from the local community.

Jacqueline Knight, Chair of the Board of Trustees, said: "Ponteland Academy Trust sees this application as an important step towards establishing itself as a cohesive educational provider.

"The proposal benefits the community in continuing to offer the option of three-tier education, offering parental choice and a smaller alternative provider for GCSE in Ponteland.

"The school has a demonstrated track record, being twice outstanding, achieving some of the best results in the country e.g. 111th in the Sunday Times Top 200 schools; and currently oversubscribed in all years.

"It has always been and remains financially viable. It has had a successful first year as an academy and was complemented by the Education and Skills Funding Agency in a recent audit."

Northumberland County Council Leader Peter Jackson has signalled both financial support and expert help for the Academy. He said the authority would help with a backlog of repairs and fund a new heating system, adding: "We will help them in kind and in support to try and find a sustainable future."

Headteacher Caroline Pryer said she hoped to receive a decision on the revised submission by the end of June.

More information on the academy's proposals can be found at ponteland.academy/consultation

Jack wins Lee Westwood golf scholarship

Keen golfer Jack Vincent has won a scholarship with Close House Golf Club and the chance to play with former world number one Lee Westwood.

The Ponteland High School Year 9 student was shortlisted to attend Close House Golf Club for a day of practical assessments along with eleven other hopefuls and 12 female golfers after submitting a written application.

After a successful day Jack secured a free one year



membership to Close House Golf Club with use of all the club facilities, one golf lesson per month with a club professional and the chance to play with Lee Westwood.

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The Ringtones
Pete Brown

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**FREE
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What's on...

Ponteland Bowling Club

Our qualified coaches are holding FREE introductory sessions for anyone, all ages, looking for a new sport or hobby. All equipment is provided. The last session is being held on Saturday June 2nd from 10.30am to 12noon. Ponteland Bowling Club is situated on Darras Road between the Memorial Hall and the tennis club. Visit pontelandbowlingclub.co.uk

St Mary's Church Hall

Railway and Archive Films will be shown on Saturday June 2nd at 3pm and 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Admission free.

Ponteland Means Business

Ponteland Means Business will meet at the Diamond Inn from 8am to 9.30am on Tuesday June 5th. Contact Brian Russell at brian.russell@profitabilitygroup.co.uk or on (01661) 872004.

Ponteland Leisure Learning - U3A

Philip Caine talks on 'Barrow to Baghdad and Back' on Wednesday June 6th at 2pm at Mary's Church Hall. Visitors welcome, no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland or call (01661) 824953.

Kirkley WI

Our guests at Kirkley Hall on Wednesday June 6th at 7pm are duo Hazel Graham and Hilary East, who will present Music, Poetry and Prose Hadrian Wall style. Guests welcome. Visit kirkleywi.wordpress.com

Party in the Park

This popular annual event will be held in Ponteland Park on Sunday June 10th from 1.30pm and will be opened by MP Guy Opperman. Admission charge £1 (under 5s free). Entertainment includes Ponteland Community Band, the Jill Errington Dancing Group, Richard Coates Middle School Orchestra and Choir, The Rock Choir, fun fair, pony rides, Punch & Judy, climbing wall, archery, bouncy castle and a host of local organisations, charities and small businesses.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

James Heneghan will talk on 'Saints Way' on Monday June 11th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall.

Ponteland WI

Our cookery expert Christine Rogers is giving a demonstration at 7pm on Tuesday June 12th in the lounge of the Memorial Hall, where we will be joined by Dinnington WI. We would like to thank all who supported our very successful coffee morning at Merton Hall in April.

Ponteland Village WI

We are celebrating our fifth birthday, so please come and join in the fun. We're holding an Invite a Friend evening (the friend comes for free) on Tuesday June 12th at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Ponteland with an American theme, including US food, a quiz and competition. Find us on Facebook.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Our demonstrator at 2pm on Wednesday June 13th at Ponteland Memorial Hall will be John Dalton from Scalby, whose theme will be 'Flowers for a Summer Day'. Non-members £7. All welcome.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

At 7pm on Wednesday June 13th at Kirkley Hall we have a speaker from The Moorland Spirit Company. Situated at Hepple, near Rothbury, this gin making company has won international awards including a double gold medal at the San Francisco World Spirit Competition last year. Cost to members £4 (non-members £5). All welcome.

Ponteland Lions Club

Our business meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday June 13th in Merton Hall. Visitors welcome. The monthly bookstall will be on Saturday June 30th at Waitrose from 9am to 4pm. We collect spectacles and hand tools at the bookstall for the Third World. Contact: 0845 833 9913.

Ponteland Community Partnership

Come to observe 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 June 20th. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirley@reevehill.plus.com

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday June 25th from 2pm to 4pm we have 'Exploring stitches: The Peking Knot', a mini workshop at the Memorial Hall on Darras Road. All welcome, cost £4. Contact: Penny Ford at penelopeford636@btinternet.com or on (01670) 788278.

750th anniversary concert: Northern Praeclassica

We welcome chamber choir Northern Praeclassica and organist Warren Smith to St. Mary's Church, Ponteland, for a concert at 7.30pm on Saturday June 30th as part of the celebrations for the 750th anniversary of the link between Ponteland Parish Church and Merton College Oxford. Tickets costing £8 including light refreshments can be reserved by emailing 750thevents@gmail.com or bought on arrival. Doors open at 6.45pm.

Music in the Park

Sunday July 1st from 2pm to 5pm at Ponteland Park. Free musical entertainment from Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel Band, Ponteland Community Band, The Ringtones and Pete Brown. See advert opposite.

St Oswald's Hospice BBQ

In the Ponteland Methodist Church garden on Sunday 8th July from 12noon onwards. £5 entry includes a burger or sausage sandwich and a drink. Raffle, children's games, ices and stalls. Contact Ann Cooper for tickets on (01661) 824347. Under fives free.

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 Village Bridge Club

We would like to welcome you to join us at our friendly club for Duplicate Bridge. During the evening we play about 20 boards and can organise a partner if you need one. Every Friday at 7pm at Merton Hall. Contact Pete Ford on peteford24@hotmail.com or on 07739 208308.

Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Concerns over vandalism and littering in this month's letters...

Delight at removal of "expensive mistake"

In response Mr Robin Ramsay's comments (May issue), I and no doubt the residents in the vicinity of the skate park/play area on Callerton Lane are delighted to hear that it will be removed.

The facility is a magnet for unruly youths who, over the years that it has been here, have caused excessive damage to property both public and private on their route through Ponteland Park to and from the facility.

The area is littered with drinks cans, bottles, broken glass and discarded food containers, and adjacent gardens are used as litter repositories.

The skate park and play area are not lit and are not covered by CCTV cameras (which was a condition of planning consent) thus providing a dark, secluded, unsupervised area which allows all manner of unsavoury activities to take place including underage alcohol consumption and graffiti writing with vulgar expletives and explicit drawings on the skate park construction.

The deck of the skate park is used as a makeshift bed; used condoms are left as evidence of the fact. Broken and discarded bottles are left littered around the area having to be removed every morning, hopefully before being witnessed by young children using the play area. The only respite from this is bad weather.

I believe a survey of youths congregating in Ponteland was undertaken recently and the majority of them did not want a skate park – they just wanted to 'hang out' with their friends.

The skate park was an expensive mistake and objections and predictions, which sadly proved correct, were ignored by planners prior to its construction.

It is hoped that such mistakes will not be repeated and prevent another £60k being wasted.

Anyone wanting to spend such sums again should surely have their priorities questioned.

There are so many things in Ponteland that could be improved utilising such sums rather than repeat previous mistakes.

Peter Crowle
Callerton Lane, Ponteland

July issue deadlines: Delivery of the July issue will start on Thursday June 28th and be completed by Wednesday July 4th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Thursday June 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 July 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.

Climbing wall replacement for skate park could be costly

Vandalism is unfortunately still with us. Even the Romans were not immune although they probably called it something else!

There are many ways today to reduce the risk of vandalism such as careful design, choice of suitable materials and supervision.

One essential process in dealing with vandalism is to repair and replace as soon as practicable and definitely not to close or remove the facility. To do otherwise is simply to encourage the vandal and feel that he – or she – has won.

It is with some regret that it appears to have been decided to close the skate park because of vandalism, especially as the repair costs are relatively low. The scheme to replace it is with a climbing wall which will require supervision at all times.

I trust that suitable financial provision for this ongoing supervision demand will be incorporated into the Town Council's planning.

Robin Ramsay MBE
The Rise, Darras Hall

Ponteland needs a clean machine

Ponteland is going downhill. The roads are full of potholes, the paths covered in debris – not to mention dog dirt.

Someone is employed to pick up litter and empty rubbish bins every day but when was the last time the shopping area and paths had a thoroughly good clean? It's a disgrace.

Other areas covered by Northumberland County Council are much better cared for, so why are we so neglected? In Newcastle and the surrounding areas a motorised vehicle cleans every day – why can't we have one?

Joan McGowan
Rowan Drive, Ponteland

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Families invited to two afternoons of entertainment in the park

Families are being invited to enjoy not one - but two - afternoons of entertainment in the park.

For the next month sees two of the biggest events in Ponteland's social calendar – the annual Party in the Park and Music in the Park.

This year's Party in the Park will be held on Sunday June 10th from 1.30pm and will be opened by MP Guy Opperman. Performing are Ponteland Community Band, the Jill Errington Dancing Group, Richard Coates Middle School Orchestra and Choir, and the Rock Choir.

Other attractions will include a fun fair, pony rides, Punch & Judy, a climbing wall, archery and a bouncy castle, alongside food and refreshments and various stalls promoting local organisations, charities and small businesses.

The event is organised by the Christian Churches together in Ponteland - St Mary's, St Mathew's Catholic Church, Ponteland Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. The admission charge at the gates will be £1 (children under 5 free).

Then on Sunday July 1st we have Ponteland Town Council's Music in the Park, compered by Radio Tyneside. Entertainment comes from Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel



Band, Ponteland Community Band, The Ringtones and Pete Brown.

The free event at Ponteland Park runs from 2pm until 5pm. Bring a deckchair or picnic blanket and a picnic and enjoy the music.

North Tyneside Steel Band perform at last year's Music in the Park.

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Campaign group urges airport to cut noise

A group of residents who live under the flight path have launched a campaign calling for Newcastle International Airport to “cut down the noise and be a better neighbour”.

The Aircraft Noise Action Group, made up of around 40 residents from Heddon-on-the-Wall, Clara Vale and Throckley, has launched a website to “combat aircraft noise”.

They claim that the airport narrowed the route for departing planes in April last year after introducing new satellite technology, meaning communities under the flight path no longer enjoy respite as they did when flights were dispersing across a wider area.

Airport bosses dispute this, saying there has been a gradual move to narrow the flight path over a period of years. They also rejected calls to widen the flight path, saying this would not be in line with national policy and would significantly increase the number of people affected by noise.

But in response to the complaints, the airport management have held several meetings with ANAG campaigners and appointed a consultant to look into the possibility of a “respite route”, and say the findings are being considered. However, any change of route requires a formal consultation process which can take several years.

The row centres on the implementation of the Standard Instrument Departure route (SID) which passes over the Heddon, Throckley and Clara Vale areas which can be seen on the graphic. The airport says aircraft have flown through this corridor for many years, and the implementation of the SID effectively formalises the route.

The majority of departing aircraft now fly within a one mile wide area over Hexham Road between Heddon-on-the-Wall and Throckley at around 3,000ft to 3,500ft.

ANAG have taken their campaign to the Civil Aviation Authority, claiming the airport did not properly consult local communities about the SID. The CAA has rejected this, saying the airport

met required regulatory standards.

Airport launches new masterplan

The campaign launch coincided with the announcement by the airport of its Masterplan 2035, a plan which envisages its contribution to the regional economy almost doubling to £2bn, supporting an additional 9,000 jobs.

The vision document predicts an increase in passenger numbers from 5.35m to 9.4m, and the east end of the runway could be extended by 700m to allow larger planes to fly to more distant long haul destinations.

Newcastle International

Airport CEO Nick Jones said: “We’ve set out a clear plan of action to continue to grow our airport to ensure it can compete in the global economy.

“We also want to ensure that growth is sustainable, so the masterplan proposes a range of measures to address community impact, minimise environmental impact and boost public transport.”

A consultation event on the masterplan is being held at Ponteland Leisure Centre from 3pm to 7pm on Wednesday July 4th. ANAG’s website can be found at aircraftnoiseaction.com

A graphic showing the flight path between Heddon-on-the-Wall and Throckley.





Ponteland Community High School Report

Thomas makes a splash at national championships

Year 10 student Thomas Storer made a splash at the English Schools Swimming Association Championships in West Sussex.

He was part of team of 30 swimmers taken from the North East and Yorkshire areas which took part in the recent ESSA inter divisional swimming championships held in Crawley.

The North East Division achieved second place of the eight divisions who participate in the competition, a tremendous achievement.

Thomas also took part in the North East Regional Swimming Championships in Sheffield and hopes to qualify for the British Swimming Championships in July and the English National Championships in August.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "I am full of admiration for students like Thomas who manage to balance significant time commitments with training whilst maintaining excellent academic performance. Thomas is an outstanding young man and I have no doubt he will continue to excel at anything he puts his mind to."



School leavers score prom at St James' Park

It is that time of the year again when we say a fond farewell to our Year 11 cohort in the form of a stylish Prom. This year it was held in the Moncur Suite at St James' Park, Newcastle, which proved to be a fantastic venue.

The Prom was a huge success with everyone enjoying an unforgettable evening of celebrations. The evening was supported by a large number of staff who were very impressed with the behaviour, maturity and appreciation our students showed during the evening.





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Gareth remembered in brother-in-law's charity walk

A devoted Darras Hall dad who died last year aged just 55 has been remembered in a 300-mile charity walk by his brother-in-law which followed key landmarks in his life.

Gareth Jones, a lifelong rugby enthusiast who played for Ponteland, died from cancer of the oesophagus and stomach, and blood clots to both lungs caused by the chemotherapy.

His widow Gill said he tackled the disease "very bravely", adding: "We were devastated to be given the original prognosis of the cancer in May 2016.

"Gareth took all of the treatment offered and despite the side effects of the chemotherapy and the symptoms of his illness continued to work on our self-build house that had been our project over the last three years. He was determined to finish the house before he died and did manage this except for one or two jobs that have since been completed."

The telecommunications engineer received care at the Marie Curie Hospice in Newcastle in his final weeks and had asked for a family donation to be made to the charity.

Gill, of The Rise, said: "The hospice gave excellent palliative care to Gareth. The staff were lovely, even advising on how to explain to a young child what was happening. There seemed to be nothing the hospice hadn't thought of and nothing was too much trouble.

"Gareth asked me to make a donation to the hospice, and we had a collection at his funeral too; the family were overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone. Gareth had been keen that we continued to support the hospice."

His sister Sue's husband Tony Brind, 58, who retired recently as a paramedic, chose to support the fundraising by the Friends of Marie Curie for a new family unit.

Tony started the walk on April 22nd – the first anniversary of Gareth's death – in his native Derbyshire. His route followed the beautiful scenery of the Pennine Way, detouring to the Lake District where Gareth trained as a marine radio officer,



before finishing along Hadrian's Wall.

Arriving back in Newburn on May 15th, Tony said: "I wanted to do a walk in Gareth's memory. The final journey depicts three important places in his life: Derby where he was born and grew up; Wray Castle where he studied in his late teens to become a Marine Radio Officer, from where he travelled the world; then Newcastle where he settled and raised a family with Gill.

"I have been overwhelmed by the support and generosity of so many people. I am grateful that this will enable the Friends to provide this additional family room that will benefit so many families in the future."

Gill said the devoted dad and grandad to Abbie and Olivia would have been very proud of Tony's efforts: "He would be very moved by the massive contribution Tony is making by doing this walk in his memory and for the hospice that Gareth thought so highly of.

"Gareth thought that the Marie Curie staff and the hospice were wonderful and could not praise them enough. Like the rest of the family he would also be very proud of Tony in his commitment in taking on this tough challenge."

A spokesperson for The Friends of Marie Curie added: "We are so grateful to Tony and Gareth's family for giving our project such amazing backing."

As we went to print the appeal had

more than quadrupled its original target of £500. Anyone wishing to make a donation should visit: justgiving.com/fundraising/tony-brind

Gareth pictured with wife Gill, daughter Abbie and granddaughter Olivia – and Tony at the end of his walk in Newburn.



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Organisers toast another successful beer festival

Plans are already underway for the sixth Ponteland Beer Festival after this year's event saw huge crowds, high temperatures and its biggest selection of food and drink – all backed by live music.

The event, organised by Ponteland Rugby Club, is now a well established community fixture with great backing from local businesses, organisations, residents, and past and present players.

Record crowds topped the 3,000 mark over the three days from Friday April 20th to Sunday April 22nd, with tickets for Saturday sold out. There were over 160 beers, lagers and ciders on offer, as well as a wine and prosecco bar and the first-ever gin bar.

The festival took place in two large marquees adjacent to the First XV pitch at Ponteland Rugby Club, with an extended separate eating area outside.

Live music ranged from country and western to funk, brass, soul, ska, motown and rock 'n' roll, with acts including The Heavenly Thrillbillies, Livewire, Scottish band Duke Street, Dunston Silver Band and Saturday night headliners North Star. Sunday saw debutants the Baghdaddies, as well as Ponteland Rock Choir and Ponteland Community Choir.

Saturday's event coincided with Ponteland Rugby Club's final Durham and Northumberland Division 1 home fixture of the season, a 31-17 victory against Guisborough.

Organiser Andy Maidwell said: "The festival goes from strength to strength every year thanks to the wonderful support of the Ponteland community and once again we are hugely indebted to all the organisations and businesses who have helped establish it as an annual fixture.

"Ticket sales reached a new record and such was demand that all tickets for Saturday were sold out in advance. The message for next year is to ensure tickets are bought well in advance; we have already started planning for our sixth festival in April 2019."

Anyone interested in being a sponsor of next year's event should email info@pontelandbeerfestival.co.uk



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Darras Hall home design wins national award

A new Darras Hall home has won a prestigious national award for the architect who designed it.

PJC Architecture has won the Highly Commended Award 2018 from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors for Maple Lodge.

The Kenton Bank Foot based practice was commissioned to design the four-bedroom, triple garage family home to meet their client's desire for a bespoke property with a modern interior and traditional exterior.

Maple Lodge was shortlisted as one of the most innovative projects in the Residential Awards Category for 2018 and the judges were not disappointed when they visited Darras Hall to inspect the property in March.

To comply with the strict private planning guidelines of the Darras Hall Estate bye laws and local planning authority, PJC Architecture designed Maple Lodge with high quality materials including natural slate roof tiles, traditional handmade bricks, timber windows and sublime stone detailing, as well as maximising the land levels to provide a taller house than usual on the estate.

Paul Conn, of PJC Architecture, said: "I've worked on a lot of projects across the UK but this is one of my favourites to date. Working on the project from its conception and seeing it come to fruition was a brilliant feeling for the team and me, but most importantly for the client. Darras Hall estate already has a lot of incredible homes, so for Maple Lodge to be shortlisted in the

RICS Awards 2018 was simply phenomenal. I am sure that it will draw a lot of positive attention to the area."

The same sentiment was echoed by the proud owner of Maple Lodge who said: "Now that the house is built we are thoroughly enjoying living in it. The living areas have a light and airy feel and we are using all the rooms in the house. The layout works really well for us. This house has exceeded our expectations.... we love it!"

Maple Lodge was the first of four plots of land to be sold on its site and with the beautiful family home now complete, it has set high standards for the other three sites to meet!



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BBC programme features old railway line revamp

A project to spruce up the old railway line from Rotary Way towards the Airport has been featured on the BBC's Garden Mania programme.

Radio Newcastle presenter Marian Foster attended the latest event on the bridleway where Air Cadets, Scouts and Explorers planted 200 wild flowers, interviewing the volunteers for her Sunday morning show.

Heather Forshaw, from the Friends of Ponteland Park, explained how she had grown a selection of appropriate wild flowers from Northumbrian seed to be planted in three areas.

Alma Dunigan, Chairman of Ponteland Partnership which is behind the project, said the idea for the latest event came from the old railway track being given wildlife corridor status in the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan and the success of earlier volunteer events.

The Community Partnership has thanked landowner Ward Bros, who donated all the manpower, materials and equipment to make the improvements, Heather Forshaw for growing the wild flowers from seed, and all the volunteers who took part.

The Scouts and Explorers will be including this activity as part of their evidence for the Duke of Edinburgh Platinum Award and the Air Cadets for their Participation in Public Events.

The BBC feature, which broadcast on May 13th, can be heard 27 minutes in at: bbc.co.uk/programmes/p001d70c

Marian Foster interviews the young volunteers



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COMMEMORATION OF THE END OF WORLD WAR ONE

The Clerk and Coun Overbury are continuing to meet and discuss the Council's involvement in the commemorations, and a recent meeting has been held with Revd Capt Allinson of St Mary's Church where various issues had been discussed. The Council agreed to the proposal to hold a poster competition for the schools and the level of prizes to be offered. A letter was being sent out to schools prior to the half term. Primary schools have been helping to plant out planters with poppy themed wildflower mix in Ponteland centre and at Broadway and the wildflower beds at Merton Way and at Broadway. The Council agreed to a suggestion to provide a perspex silhouette from the 'there but not there' campaign for each of the churches in Ponteland. Revd Capt Allinson agreed to have St. Mary's Church open all day on Sunday November 11th and to provide refreshments for that evening when the beacon lighting was being held. The Town Council would meet any costs. The Clerk was also asked to seek grants to fund a light display to be projected on to St. Mary's Church during the beacon lighting on November 11th.

YOUTH SERVICE

The Town Council had previously agreed to provide some outreach work in Ponteland on a month by month basis. The County Council's Youth Service Team had stated that they

could not provide the service on this basis and would only be able to offer to provide outreach for a minimum of three months. The Council agreed to provide outreach work for a period of three months starting later in the year and asked that monthly update reports be provided.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed the following recommendations from the Highways Working Party meeting on May 11th: following advice from the County Council, it was agreed that all future requests for additional street lights would be referred to NCC as it was outside of the Town Council's remit to provide street lighting; to accept an offer from NCC to install two new raised bus stops on Cheviot View. The Highways WP was also pleased to report that NCC are continuing with the roll out of introducing 20mph speed limits for all schools in Northumberland.

ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

Coun Alan Varley has been re-elected as Mayor for 2018-19 and Coun Christine Greenwell has been re-elected to the position of Deputy Mayor for 2018-19.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on May 16th



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Triple setback for Medburn villagers fighting new housing development

Beleaguered residents in Medburn have suffered a triple setback in their campaign against new housing development.

Over the past year Pont News has featured the villagers' battle against the numerous developers building homes on various sites located off The Avenue.

The firms are accused of damaging the private road with construction vehicles creating large potholes and blocking access to driveways.

Last month we reported residents' delight after a planning application for two executive homes north of Dyke House was rejected against officers' advice, following an earlier refusal for 16 homes last November.

But on May 14th members of Castle Morpeth Local Area Committee approved plans for two houses north of Burnlea and a detached two-storey home at Harrison Hall and councillors were told an inspector had upheld an appeal against an earlier refusal of planning permission for four homes at Prospect Farm. All three schemes are located off The Avenue.

Margaret Chaytor, who lives on The Avenue and spoke against the Harrison Hall application at the meeting, said: "We are now resigned to the fact that all the surrounding fields will be built

on, accessing via The Avenue, and there is nothing we can do to stop it. There will be years of construction traffic along The Avenue.

"Two years ago Medburn was a hamlet of approximately 70 houses. Over the past two years approval has been given for around 150 dwellings. There has been no assessment of the viability or sustainability of this 200 per cent increase in residential properties.

"The Avenue in Medburn is an unadopted single width track with three blind and dangerous bends. Residents have endured two years of construction traffic, yards from their homes, destroying the road with huge potholes. The road is regularly blocked, hindering residents' access. There are no safety measures. Children can no longer walk to the end of the road for the school bus.

"Because of the many small scale developments Medburn has fallen under the radar of the county council's Strategic Planning Committee. Medburn needs a public inquiry to review this insensitive and uncontrolled planning."

The inspector who upheld the Prospect Farm appeal said the scheme would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, adding additional traffic impact would be "relatively modest" and that Ponteland was close enough to reach for services and facilities without the need to drive.



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Group launched to take Neighbourhood Plan forward

A community leader who spearheaded the development of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan has met MP Guy Opperman to discuss how it could influence future community priorities.

Alma Dunigan, chairman of Ponteland Community Partnership, led the voluntary group which formulated the Plan over a five year period on behalf of the Town Council.

She will be joined by two other former members of the neighbourhood plan steering group working on behalf of PCP to identify suitable community projects for the future.

Mrs Dunigan met the MP to discuss how the Neighbourhood Plan, which was 'made' (came into force) last November, is to be used by the Community Partnership to identify future projects.

She said: "This is an exciting opportunity. The plan gives our group flexibility to view new possibilities for projects which means that the vision of the plan continues and we can consider what else could enhance the quality of life for people in the parish."

The Neighbourhood Plan includes 32 planning policies prepared from community consultations over a five year period where residents recommended priorities which shaped the final document.

The document includes planning policy PNP 4 covering some of the unique features of the Darras Hall Trust Deed which now will be used by Northumberland County Council when considering any planning application within the estate.

Darras Hall properties need to comply with the bylaws and all applications need covenant consent by the Estate Committee as well as planning approval from NCC.

Some items could not be included in the Plan as they were



not within its scope but were selected as "future community actions" attached as an appendix to be considered by other organisations. It is this section and other ideas from the supportive text in the Plan which this new subgroup will be considering later as projects.

Mr Opperman MP said: "The Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan is a valuable document. I want to thank the steering group and all the local community who have worked so hard on it. I hope Ponteland Community Partnership will now be working with the local community together to formulate next steps.

"It was a pleasure to sit down with Alma and go through the neighbourhood plan, and I hope that the next chapter will show that this is a great step forward for Ponteland."

The Chairman of Darras Hall Estate Committee, Andrew Mate, presented a commemorative plaque at the committee's Annual General Meeting in gratitude to the former Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's work on behalf of the Town Council.

Pictured at the Estate Committee presentation are (l to r): Chris Winks of PCP, Chairman of Darras Hall Estate Committee Andrew Mate, Alma Dunigan and Coun Peter Jackson.

Revamp for pooch parlour

A pooch parlour in Kirkley has enjoyed a makeover of its own.

For Northumberland College's Dog Grooming salon at Kirkley Hall has had a revamp, including new interiors, a new designated washing area, brand-new non-slip floors and extended floor space.

Jen Bell, head of the college's Kirkley Hall campus, said: "The dog grooming staff and students take pride in having many satisfied clients and are thrilled with the salons' new look.

"It's great to see the salon thriving and the team utilising the new space. Our veterinary nursing team have also joined the dog grooming team in the same building, which is a great addition to the centre. We hope to welcome lots of new faces along to try out our professional services soon."

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