

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



400-home plans withdrawn as garden village battle heads to the courts

Shoppers warned as purse thieves strike

Tributes paid to political stalwart

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Blooming marvellous!

More than 40 businesses, schools, community groups and dozens of volunteers joined forces to ensure Northumbria in Bloom judges enjoyed a clean and colourful welcome to Ponteland.

The magnificent floral displays included a giant poppy on Coates Green in this, the 100th anniversary year of the end of World War One.

The bug hotel has been created by pupils from Ponteland Primary, Richard Coates School, Darras

Hall Primary and the Town Council with a sign created by Ponteland First School. It is in St Mary's Churchyard, a special entry in this year's Northumbria in Bloom awards.

Pupils also helped with planting barrels on North Road and planters at

Broadway and Thornhill Road, while more than 30 volunteers helped on a litter pick day.

Ponteland secured a silver gilt award in the 'small towns' category in its first entry to Britain in Bloom last year, after five consecutive gold awards in the 'small towns' category in Northumbria in Bloom.

We are representing 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).

RHS judges will visit again in August to measure the standard of floral displays and the general cleanliness of Ponteland and Darras Hall, compared to 75 other Britain in Bloom finalists. A list of businesses and organisations who have supported this year's entries is on p14.

Cover shot and p3 photos by Barry Pells.

MP welcomes withdrawal of Clickemin housing plans

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman has welcomed a developer's decision to withdraw plans for a 400-home development on green belt land at West Clickemin Farm.

Last month we reported that a date had been set for a public inquiry next January into the controversial plans for the 21-hectare site between the A696 at Cheviot View and B6545 Rotary Way, after they were called in by the Secretary of State.

Northumberland County Council had supported the proposals, which would have contributed £5.5m to the nearby schools and leisure scheme, under its previous Labour-led administration.

Its Strategic Planning Committee said it was 'minded to approve' the

planning application in March last year but it had to be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit due to the size of the scheme and its location on green belt land.

However, after the now Conservative-led authority indicated it was revisiting the decision following its policy shift on green belt development – and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced the public inquiry – Banks Property said it was withdrawing the plans.

Describing the call-in decision as "political", the firm's principal development planner Justin Hancock said: "The West Clickemin Farm site has long been recognised as appropriate for development of the type we are proposing, and our proposals for it were carefully developed over many years to allow for a great deal of information about the site and the wider local area to be factored into them.

"Throughout this process, we worked closely with Northumberland County Council's planning officers on all aspects of the project, and especially on securing a significant contribution that the scheme would make towards enhancing the educational facilities available to families in and around Ponteland.

"The County Council's newly-reached opinion that no private sector funding is required has undermined the current case for development at West Clickemin Farm.

"It is highly regrettable that, after so many years' work, we therefore find ourselves having to withdraw these carefully-planned and sensible-sited proposals, but with the Council's change of stance and its decision to return the planning application to committee, we

have been left with no viable option but to do so."

The decision was met with delight from campaigners who had opposed the plans. Ponteland Green Belt Group described the announcement as "great news for Ponteland residents".

And MP Guy Opperman said: "I welcome this decision as the right thing for Ponteland. We have said from day one our campaign has not been against homes, but about protecting the green belt.

"Ever since our very first battle at Birney Hill, I have remained hopeful that our campaign to protect Ponteland's green belt would succeed. Today is another good day for protecting our precious environment and preventing the urban sprawl into Newcastle.

"There were always clear and objective planning grounds on which this application to build on the Ponteland green belt should not have gone ahead. I am very pleased our arguments have been listened to."

But Mr Hancock added that Banks Property "still feel development at West Clickemin Farm is the most logical and sustainable site for development in Ponteland" and "intend to retain this site within our development portfolio".



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A visual of the proposed housing development.

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School celebrates five decades before relocation to new home

The 52-year history of a Ponteland school was celebrated with current and former pupils, teachers and parents before its relocation to a brand new building in September.

It opened as Darras Hall County Primary Infants School on September 12th 1966 with headteacher Miss Elsie Burt, and has had 22,000 pupils through its doors over the five decades since.

It has had several different names, including when it was split into two schools – Runnymede First

School and Greenlee First School – in 1972, later rejoining to become Darras Hall First School in 1985. Last year it was renamed Darras Hall Primary School as part of the local education restructure.

In the school's final week before closing for demolition, it held Journey through Time – a two day exhibition of memories and memorabilia from each decade.

Former pupils were able to have a final look around the school – to see inside the head teacher's office or sit at their old desk in the classroom – and there were performances from school choirs, the ensemble and the Glee club.

For some, the school has been more than just a place they attended as children

– former pupils Tara Pritchard and Jo Henderson are now teachers there!

Demolition of the upper school will begin in August, with two MUGAs (multi use games areas) created in its place during the autumn. The lower school will remain for the time being, with nursery and reception based there until they are relocated to the main school and the remainder of the old school buildings are demolished in 2020.

The new adjacent school building has been funded as part of a £50m three tier to two tier reorganisation of schools in the Ponteland area by Northumberland County Council.

This will also include a new £46m combined primary and high school and leisure centre, and extending, remodelling and refurbishing St Andrews at Heddon-on-the-Wall, Whalton First School, Belsay First School, Stamfordham Village First School, and the Ponteland First School building which Richard Coates Middle School will relocate to.

An open day is being held for pupils, parents and residents on Saturday August 11th from 10am to 2pm where the finished school, which will have a music studio and outdoor classroom on the roof, can be seen.



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Taxpayers face costly legal bill as garden village battle heads to court

Taxpayers face a costly legal bill as a bitter battle between a developer and local authority over plans for a 2,000-home garden village on the outskirts of Ponteland looks to be heading to court.

The Lugano Group, behind the proposed Dissington Garden Village, has issued a letter before action in respect of a claim reported by regional media to be worth millions of pounds against Northumberland County Council.

The dispute centres on the authority's policy change on green belt development following the election of a Conservative administration last year.

In March 2017 the Strategic Planning Committee said it was 'minded to approve' the garden village planning application. It should have then been referred to the National Planning Casework Unit for a ruling on whether it would be called in for decision by the Secretary of State, but this has not yet happened nearly 18 months on.

Lugano has made a series of allegations which the council has strenuously denied in two lengthy letters to the head of legal services, which include claims pressure had been put on senior planning officials within the authority to scrap the Core Strategy (long term planning blueprint for the county) and reverse the 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.

The firm said they had written to the Secretary of State asking him to intervene and had reported the matter to the Crown Prosecution Service. Calls for an independent inquiry into the claims have also been made by the Chairman of the Labour Party, Wansbeck MP Ian Lavery, Blyth Labour MP Ronnie Campbell and party colleague Dennis Skinner MP.

Now Lugano has issued formal legal proceedings against Northumberland County Council Leader Peter Jackson,



Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee Coun John Riddle, and Chief Executive Daljit Lally OBE as well as against the authority itself.

The company has raised a number of allegations of serious misconduct in relation to the planning process and the handling of the planning application for Dissington Garden Village.

A report to the county council's cabinet meeting on July 23rd sought permission to indemnify all three named from the impending legal action, requesting an initial £10,000 indemnity for each, with further indemnities in tranches of £15,000 for each for the purposes of obtaining independent legal advice and representation, to be funded from general contingencies.

As well as - but not linked to - the Lugano legal action, the conciliation service ACAS has advised the council that a former employee is proposing to make, as yet, unspecified employment claims against both Coun Jackson and Mrs Lally personally.

The report by Legal Services Manager Liam Henry states: "Clearly the obtaining of separate legal representation incurs a cost, and given the circumstances of both matters, where no evidence to substantiate the claims has been produced to date, although in the Dissington matter the developer's solicitors maintain that this exists, it is considered reasonable for the Council to consider granting an indemnity in respect of these members and officers for the purposes of separate

legal representation; as the actions complained of by the developers are actions which were undertaken by the three persons named in the course of their duties with the Council and when they were exercising functions on behalf of the Council."

It continues: "...if a Court finds that if all of any of Cllrs Jackson and Riddle, or Mrs Lally behaved improperly, illegally and outside their authority in relation to the developers, then the Council is entitled to be refunded all costs paid out under the indemnity."

Lugano Group chairman Richard Robson said: "These matters are of the upmost seriousness but unfortunately to date we have not had any assurances from the Council that our concerns have been properly addressed.

"Accordingly and with regret, we have no option but to commence formal legal proceedings against the authority and individuals concerned. We have engaged a leading international law firm, Pinsent Masons, along with a specialist QC and have now served a formal 'letter before claim'."

A county council spokesperson said: "We are taking legal advice with regard to correspondence from the Lugano Group. As previously advised, we believe that the council has acted lawfully and reasonably throughout this process. We continue to work with Lugano on their live planning application for Dissington Garden Village."

A visual of the proposed garden village.



Tributes paid to popular ex-politician

Tributes have been paid to a popular Ponteland Alderman who has died aged 91.

Sheila Campbell MBE, of Ridgely Drive, represented the people of Ponteland East on the former Castle Morpeth Borough Council for 18 years and was also a parish councillor.

The former teacher retired from the borough council in 2005 and then from the parish council in 2007 to spend more time visiting her two sons and three grandsons in London and Derbyshire.

But she kept busy in a number of roles, including Guide Movement Ambassador, cub pack leader and President of Castle Morpeth Disability Association where she continued her support of disabled people after 20 years teaching at the Northern Counties School for the Deaf in Newcastle.

On retirement from the Borough Council 13 years ago the Liberal Democrat, who had been Mayor of Castle Morpeth in 1997-98, received praise from all sides of the council chamber.

Then Council Leader Alan Sambrook described her at the time as 'one of the most outstanding councillors within the borough' and said 'a void will be created by her departure which will take some filling'. Former borough Lib Dem Leader David Parker said on her retirement she had championed the cause of people with disabilities and 'made a real difference'.

In 2009 Alderman Campbell MBE attended the official reopening of Morpeth's 13th century Chantry following flood damage in her capacity as member of the Bagpipe Liaison Committee. She was pictured sharing a joke with the visiting Princess Royal.

Interviewed after the Royal visit, she joked: "The Princess Royal spoke to me and saw my name badge, and I pointed out that there was no such thing as an 'Alderwoman' – try saying that quickly, it doesn't sound very flattering!"

Coun Peter Jackson, Leader of Northumberland County Council, was also a former borough council colleague. Speaking after hearing news of her death, he said: "Sheila Campbell was both

a colleague and a friend for many years on Castle Morpeth Borough Council.

"I have fond memories of her as being very open and interested in all that was going on in the community. She was

enthusiastic in all that she did. She was very involved in village life and very much had the interests of Ponteland at heart."

Alderman Campbell MBE pictured during the Royal visit in 2009.

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Another view on how to address speeding vehicles in Darras Hall in this month's letters...

Skate park user's plea against closure

My son Ciaran, as an avid user of the skate park, would like to send a plea for it to stay and to be further improved.

He could also give some useful suggestions on positive ways forward for a park that would be stronger and more useful and user friendly, with improved design.

Ciaran wants the decision makers to be aware that the damage to the skate park was unintentional and by a professional scooter rider when a trick was so powerful it created a hole.

He did want to point out too that the decision to close it due to it being 'underused' was a decision made in the winter when, of course, it wouldn't have been used so much.

For me as a mother, his interest in scooting - which I've realised is a popular sport with professionally organised competitions - is something I'm quite glad about. It's a very sociable, respecting, physical fun activity, which keeps him busy in a very good way.

Please pass on our comments to relevant decision makers in the hope that we can influence perhaps in a positive way for our children going forward.

Jayne Caldwell, Ebchester Court, Kingston Park

Thanks to Good Samaritan

We would like to thank the very kind resident of Ashbrooke Drive who spotted our daughter trying to push her punctured bike past his house.

Not only did he offer to help, he replaced the damaged inner tube and fitted a new tyre on her bike. It is really heartening to know that some people are still willing to help a stranger.

Henry Herald and Jennie Klein, Smallburn

One way system for Darras Hall would exacerbate speeding problem

Whilst initially it might sound a good idea to have a one-way system for Middle Drive and Darras Hall Road (July letters) the problem will be that it will become an even bigger race track than it is now.

A 'clear' road will be like a red flag to a bull! At least parked vehicles and oncoming traffic occasionally slows down some of the racers.

We should also consider strategically placed speed bumps, traffic islands and even additional roundabouts. Law enforcement to stop parking on pavements would also help considerably but the responsibility appears to be passed from police to county and local councils and round again.

Peter Sutcliffe, Middle Drive, Darras Hall

September issue deadlines: Delivery of the September issue will start on Thursday August 30th and be completed by Wednesday September 5th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Thursday August 16th. 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 September 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.

Minister visits to discuss rural business



Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman hosted a Ministerial visit to discuss farming and rural business in Northumberland.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Farming George Eustice MP attended the summit alongside representatives from Natural England, the Environment Agency, Newcastle University and farmers and agricultural business leaders from across the region.

The round-table event, held at Ogle Hill Head Farm near Morpeth, gave farming experts the opportunity to ask the Minister about important issues affecting rural communities.

Mr Opperman said: "I was really pleased to be able to welcome the Minister to the Hexham constituency. As one of the most rural constituencies in the UK, it is impossible to overstate how important farming and rural business is to our community, and I will continue to do everything I can to champion the cause of farmers, food producers and rural businesses in the constituency."

What's on...

Royal Northern Sinfonia tour comes to Ponteland

The Royal Northern Sinfonia will be performing an evening of Scandinavian chamber music at St Mary's Church on Saturday August 4th as part of its 'Nordic Summer Nights' tour. Nordic Chamber Nights 2 includes Rasmussen Wind Quintet in F, Magnus Lindberg Arabesques, Grieg Quartet in F, Nielsen Serenata in Vano and Berwald Grand Septet in B flat. Tickets costing £15 (£5 for U18s) from sagegateshead.com/event/nordic-summer-nights

Ponteland Leisure Learning – U3A

Our speaker at 2pm on Wednesday August 8th Ann Wilson talks on 'The 19th Century on the Farne Islands'. Visitors always welcome, no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or call (01661) 824953.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

David Butler will talk on 'Plant Hunters' on Monday August 13th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall.

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 August 15th. Web: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday August 20th from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, we have afternoon tea and stitches. Bring something you are working on and enjoy a relaxed afternoon with tea, scones and conversation. All welcome. Contact Secretary Penny Ford at penelopeford636@btinternet.com or on (01670) 788278.

Ponteland Lions Club

We do not have a business meeting in August but will meet for a social activity towards the end of the month. Our Charity Fund bookstall is at Waitrose on Saturday August 26th from 9am to 4pm. We also collect spectacles and hand tools for recycling to the Third World. We need help with our monthly bookstalls. If you could spare an hour or want

to find out about Lions please phone 0845 833 9913.

Ponteland Rotary Duck Race

This year's Duck Race event at Ponteland Park is being held on the afternoon of Sunday September 2nd. It will include the usual favourites of the five duck races, the boats made by children from local school and the commercial boat races. Extra additions include some new children's rides, a wider selection of food and drinks and an extended range of market stalls for families to enjoy.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

On Tuesday September 4th at 7.30pm at St. Mary's Parish Centre, John Thomson will give a talk on "Eco North Surveys and An Introduction to Bats", followed by a bat walk in the nearby park. Admission £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

Ponteland Parish Flower Show

The 41st Ponteland Parish Flower Show will be held at the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 8th, open to the public at 1pm. The schedules are available at many locations in Ponteland. Classes are for flowers and heathers, vegetables and fruit, children, cookery, handicrafts, woodcraft, painting, wines and photography. Exhibitors will be able to bench their exhibits on Friday Sept 7th from 7am until 9pm and on Saturday Sept 8th from 8am until 11am. Entries can be made to the Secretary Les Dinning on (01661) 821941 or by post with the entry form at the back of the schedule.

Ponteland Village WI

There will be no August meeting, but we'll be back on Tuesday September 11th, when we'll be hearing a talk on the history of handbags. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month (except August) at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Ponteland. Find us on Facebook: "Ponteland Village W.I."

Dishforth Military Wives Choir concert

Dishforth Military Wives Choir is returning to the Memorial Hall for a concert recalling our brave men, so many of whom perished in the terrible carnage of WWI. The Choir has also produced a CD – 'Remember'. The

concert is at 7.30pm on Saturday September 29th. Tickets costing £10 will be on Sale at Geoff Steven & Son Opticians, Main Street, Ponteland and online through Eventbrite. Proceeds to The Royal Society for Blind Children.

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.

Rotary Club of Ponteland

Rotary Club of Ponteland meet every Tuesday at Ponteland Golf Club. The meetings alternate between lunch times (1st and 3rd Tuesdays) and evenings (2nd and 4th Tuesdays). New people members are very welcome. Contact Alan Hall at alanhalleef@msn.com or on (01661) 860284.

Audio Book Group

The group is for people who have visual impairment or face barriers in reading printed books. Each month members take home an audio book, then return to the next meeting for an informal and relaxed discussion lead by the group leader. We meet at Ponteland Library in Ponteland Leisure Centre on the first Monday of each month from 10.30am-12noon. Membership is free. Contact Michelle Watson at mwatson@activenorthumberland.org.uk or (01670) 622562.



Sun shines as music plays in the park

The sun shone as the music played to families enjoying an afternoon of entertainment in the park.

The Town Council's Music in the Park has become a popular fixture in Ponteland's annual social calendar, and this year's event featured favourites Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel Band, Ponteland Community Band, The Ringtones and Pete Brown.

The free event at Ponteland Park, held on Sunday July 1st, was compered by Radio Tyneside.

Photos by The Image Farm.



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GRANT APPLICATIONS – NORTHUMBERLAND CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU

The Council considered a grant application from the Northumberland Citizens Advice Bureau regarding a proposed service in Ponteland for a half day each fortnight. This followed a presentation by the Northumberland CAB at the June meeting. After considering the information provided and the statistics of usage relating to Ponteland, the Town Council agreed not to proceed with a grant at the present time.

NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN

The County Council is consulting on the Northumberland Local Plan from July 4th until August 15th. A report outlining the main issues relating to Ponteland was considered by the Council, which agreed that councillors would submit comments to the Clerk who would formulate a response for their consideration and submission to NCC by the deadline date.

This report is based on the minutes of the Ponteland Town Council meeting held on July 11th.

Thanks to Ponteland in Bloom supporters

The Town Council and volunteers working on the In Bloom entries would like to say a huge thank you to the sponsors and supporters of both our Northumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom entries.

Every contribution has made a difference and has helped to make Ponteland look so attractive during the summer months. Thanks to you all and to everyone who has helped by providing their own displays or assisted with litter picks and work days.

The following businesses and organisations all supported the displays:

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New attractions for this year's Duck Race

Organisers of the Ponteland Rotary Duck Race are promising new attractions for this year's event.

New children's rides, a wider selection of food and drink and an extended range of market stalls will be on offer alongside the usual favourites of the five duck races, the boats made by children from local schools and the commercial boat races.

Other attractions will include a bouncy slide, tombola, ball in a bucket, face-painting, food from Kielder Meats and a country market area.

The event, which is always popular with families in Ponteland and the wider area, is being held in Ponteland Park on the afternoon of Sunday September 2nd and more information can be found on Twitter at [@pontelandduckraces](https://twitter.com/pontelandduckraces) and on facebook.com/PontelandDuckRace

Families enjoy last year's Duck Race. Photo by The Image Farm.

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Athletes from across UK compete in Ponteland's first sprint triathlon

By Paul Holborrow, Ponteland Runners

More than 120 athletes from across the UK took part in Ponteland's first Sprint Triathlon event.

Organised by local club Ponteland Tri, the event features in the North East Region Triathlon Grand Prix circuit and attracted competitors from as far afield as Scotland and Portsmouth to take part.

They completed 16 lengths of the leisure centre pool before embarking on a 20km cycle ride around Ponteland, visiting Dalton village before returning to Ponteland via Cheeseburn. Once back at the leisure centre, athletes completed a 5km run along the old railway track towards Dobbies before returning safely along the verge on Rotary Way.

Event Director Sue Heppell praised all those taking part on what was a hot sunny day: "Today has been absolutely fantastic – everyone has enjoyed themselves and the village has come out and supported those taking part.

"I'd particularly like to thank our sponsors for getting behind us and helping establish the event, and of course to our members and volunteers who have all helped put on a terrific and safe event. I am sure next year the event will be even bigger, and with the addition of a junior section in the pipeline, these are exciting times for the club and for triathlon in Ponteland".

With Ponteland athletes Elaine Stroud and Abby Dorani both picking up first places in their respective age categories, the event held on Sunday July 1st was a real local triumph.



Ponteland Tri Club member Fiona McCargill finishes her first Sprint Tri distance event.

If you would like to take part in triathlon visit pontelandtri.org.uk or contact secretary@pontelandrunners.org.uk for more details.

Strictly Starters Autumn Term

Adult beginners dance classes starting in September running from 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

on a Monday in Stannington;

Wednesday in Ponteland; & Thursday in Morpeth.

These classes are ideal for adult couples of all ages who want to have an enjoyable hour and a half learning to dance some basic Ballroom and Latin American Argentine Tango and popular Sequence dance routines.

Our aim is to make these sessions fun to attend as we give you the opportunity to laugh, learn and exercise both body and mind with like-minded people in a friendly and social environment.

Places will be strictly limited and we apply a first

come first served rule, so if you are interested in coming along, or you would like to register your place, then please contact us now at:



strictlystarters@btinternet.com



Facebook page: @strictlystarters



Malcolm & Sandra 07768 596380

Falklands veteran rises to the challenge

A Falklands veteran has successfully conquered his mammoth mountain challenge and raised nearly £5,000 for mental health charities.

John Mew, 60, completed the ultimate SAS selection test, the grueling 24km Fan Dance Race in the Brecon Beacons where participants run over the Pen Y Fen, the highest mountain, not just once but twice – and with a full 25lb pack on their backs.

His time of just under six hours was clocked on one of the hottest days of the year where temperatures in the sheltered valleys beneath the peaks registered more than 30 degrees.

The money will be shared between the Armed Forces charity SSAFA and Forward Assist, the specialist veteran's charity based in Dudley, Northumberland.

John, from Dinnington, said: "The soaring temperatures made it even harder and there were times when I thought I would not make it but I knew I had to keep going. At the finish I was physically and mentally exhausted but elated. I would like to thank everyone who has supported me. It is hugely appreciated and I know the money will help others affected by mental health issues.

"Taking on this challenge gave me a target and a focus and the chance to give back to what so many people have given to me".

John was on board HMS Coventry in 1982 when it was hit by three Argentine bombs and sunk within 20 minutes with the loss of 20 crew members and nearly 30 others injured. He has suffered from anxiety and depression and was only recently diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

John served in the Royal Navy for 12 years as a physical training instructor, ship's diver and as a member of the Portsmouth Command Field Gun Crew.

He was also named in July as a runner-up in Premiership Rugby's BREAKTHRU Achiever of the Year Award after completing a 12-week men's health programme with Newcastle Falcons Move Like a Pro scheme.

Taking part in the weekly sessions have been a key driver in John taking a more positive view on life and to become more physically healthy.

The awards are supported by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Rugby Union as community programmes continue to transform lives on and off the pitch.

There is still time to donate and support John by visiting uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JohnMew



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Railway line eco project wins regional award

An environmental project which has seen Ponteland's old railway line transformed into a wildlife corridor by community volunteers has won a regional award.

The two-mile long former railway track from Rotary Way south to Newcastle Airport was built in 1901 and ceased operation in the 1960s.

It needed significant reinstatement work as the track had narrowed significantly over time with waterlogged potholes and overgrown vegetation which had drastically reduced accessibility.

Work included litter picks and pruning days, planting of new trees and wildflowers, design of interpretation panels, and reinstatement of hardcore.

The project was featured on BBC Newcastle's Garden Mania programme and is supporting the town's Northumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom award entries.

Ponteland Community Partnership entered the Old Railway Line project



for the LOVE Northumberland awards and was 'highly commended' in the urban category. Members received the award from Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland at a ceremony compered by BBC's Carol Malia at Alnwick Garden.

PCP Chairman Alma Dunigan thanked landowner Ward Bros for reinstating the hardcore, the Community Foundation for

funding and all the volunteers involved.

Ponteland Middle School pupil Ben Campbell received an Outstanding Individual award, after almost single-handedly encouraging the school to recycle paper and cardboard over the past four years.

The Community Partnership receive the award from the Duchess of Northumberland.



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Ponteland Community High School Report

Once in a lifetime trip to US west coast

By Kate Morris, Amelia McKenna and Samantha Gray

Year 10 students enjoyed a “once in a lifetime” trip to the west coast of the United States.

The eight day geography field trip took in San Francisco, Yosemite National Park, Death Valley, Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon.

Highlights included the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz Island, seeing the tallest waterfall in North America – the 2,425ft Yosemite Falls, badwater salt flats, a trip to Hoover Dam, the skywalk at the Grand Canyon and shopping at Caesars Palace Hotel.

At Yosemite National Park we learnt all about the rock types, the river, the native trees that grow there and the formation of the glacial U shaped valley. At the badwater salt flats we learnt how the sea water had evaporated and left pure salt behind.



At Hoover Dam we had a power plant tour, finding out how the dam was built and the water is turned to electricity.

We have many fantastic memories of so many spectacular sights - this was a once in a lifetime trip.

Joseph wins silver medal for Team GB in Madeira

Year 9 student Joseph Anderson represented the Pentathlon GB team in the International Biathlon in Madeira.

He had a very successful competition, finishing second in his age group to secure the individual Silver Medal for Team GB. He has also been selected by Team GB for the next international competition, the European Championships in Germany at the end of July.

Head of PE Allan Atkinson said: “Joseph is doing outstandingly well in his chosen sport - to be representing your country at such a young age is fantastic. In school, Joseph is modest and unassuming - attributes that will undoubtedly serve him well in the future”.



Young physicists receive awards at university ceremony

Young physicists Hannah Tumia and Harley Rowe-Maguire received certificates and vouchers at the North East Schools Young Physicists of the Year Ceremony at Northumbria University.

The annual awards are funded by the Ogden Trust and designed to recognise the very best physics students in Year 10 across the region. Hannah and Harley attended with their parents and science teacher David Anderson.

Ponteland Rotary Club sponsor annual High School golf competition

A big thank you to Ponteland Golf Club for accommodating the High School's Annual Golf Competition.

Thanks also to Stewart Blair and the Rotary Club for their sponsorship. It was a fantastic day with excellent feedback from the participating pupils; they were a credit to their schools.



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Warning as shoppers targeted by thieves stealing cash



By PC Ingrid Clayton, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

Last month I provided advice to be aware and vigilant of door to door fish sellers; this month I would like to make the community aware of the increase of thefts from people out shopping.

In the last few months police have received reports of thefts where victims are targeted in supermarkets whilst they are shopping.

The method being used is that a victim enters a supermarket, places their bag in a trolley and whilst distracted shopping their wallet/purse is stolen. These crimes are literally taking place within seconds, with offenders leaving the scene immediately.

Unfortunately for some of these victims large quantities of money have been stolen, therefore I ask for everyone to be particularly vigilant when shopping.

Please keep your bag and valuables on your person, as opposed to being left in a trolley, and where possible avoid carrying large amounts of cash. If you notice someone acting suspiciously please contact a member of staff or the police.

Anti-social behaviour

Over the last few weeks there have been fresh reports of anti-social behaviour, particularly in the centre of Ponteland. Police have taken positive action where appropriate; this has included one youth being interviewed for causing criminal damage, one Community Protection Notice warning letter being issued and 10 letters issued informing parents their child has been involved in anti-social behaviour.

The Neighbourhood Policing team held an assembly at Ponteland Middle School prior to the break-up of the summer holidays to send out a clear message of the impact and consequences of anti-social behaviour.

Anti-social behaviour is unacceptable and therefore I request the support of the community that you ensure you know the whereabouts of your child and that they understand they are

accountable for their behaviour and conduct when socialising in Ponteland.

To view the latest crime figures in your area visit:
northumbria.police.uk/crime_mapping

If you do require to report an incident or crime please do so via the 101 service or in an emergency on 999. I can also be contacted directly on 109@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

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NCL Airport is available to download on iOS and Android. See newcastleairport.com/nclairport-app for more information.

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