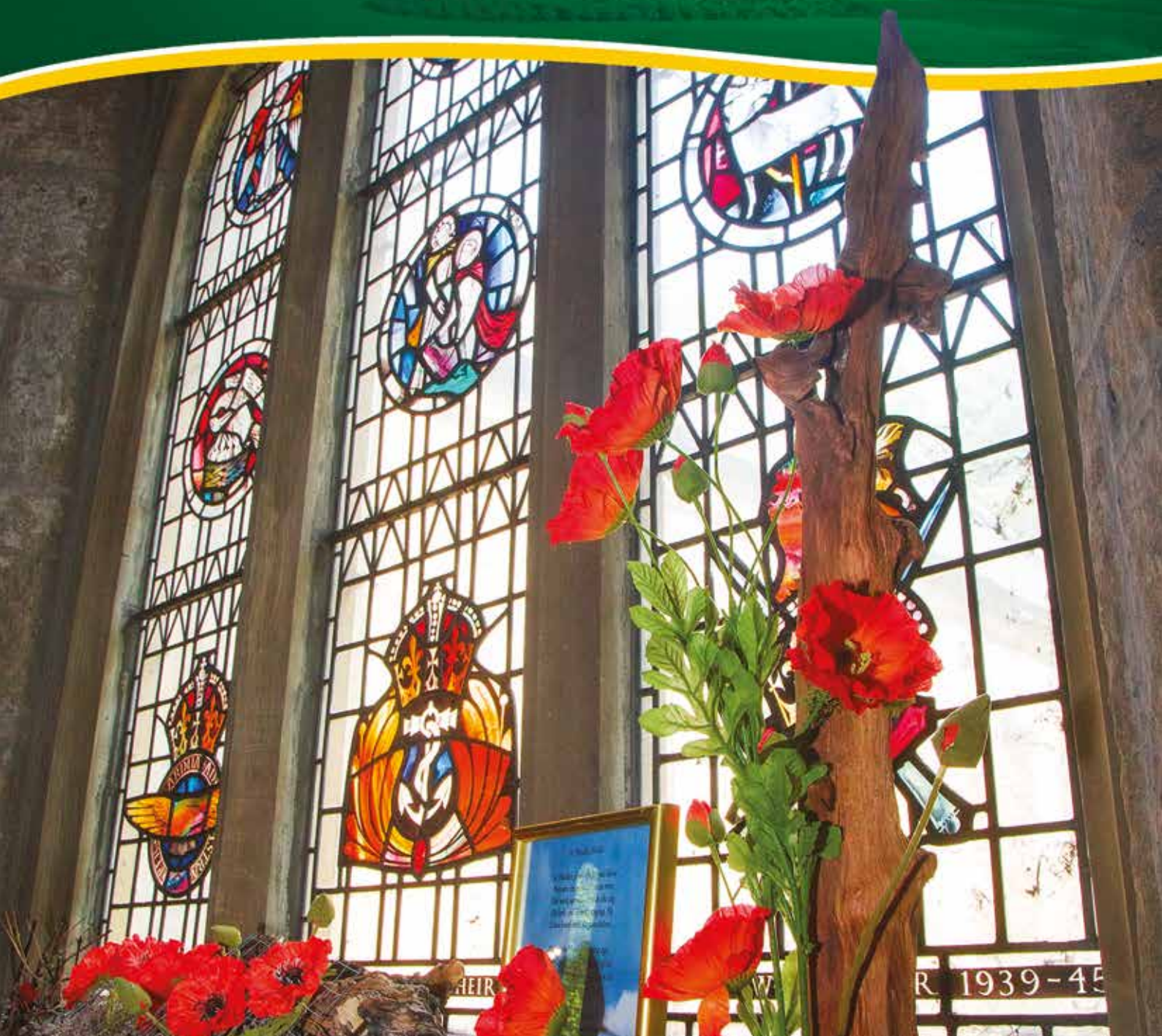


pontnews&views

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Head's praise at improved A level results

Newcastle firm wins £14m Medburn housing contract

Bells and blooms at church festival

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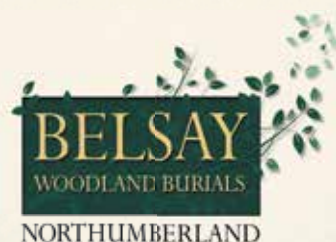
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Floral and art festival marks 750th anniversary

The celebrations marking the 750th anniversary of the link between St Mary's Church in Ponteland and Merton College continued with a colourful festival of flowers and art.

The art exhibition was co-ordinated by Lewis Hanna with 80 paintings exhibited from both Ponteland and Knightsbridge artists, Gosforth, and more than 20 paintings sold.

The Festival of Flowers was co-ordinated by Janet and Pat Cooper, supported by a veritable army of flower arrangers from both churches and local flower clubs. People enjoyed refreshments in the marquee, again manned each day by Stephen and Julie Bell and helpers.

The festival was held from July 27th to 30th.

Photos by The Image Farm.





Freda celebrates 100th birthday with the Mayor

A Ponteland care home threw a special 100th birthday party for a resident who has lived there since it opened nearly 30 years ago.

Freda Owen, who has lived at Meadowfield Park since May 1989, was presented with her birthday card from The Queen and a bouquet of flowers by Coun Alan Varley, Mayor of Ponteland.

The mother-of-four also enjoyed a family party at Matfen Hall with her three sons and daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as her two sisters. Grandson Anthony brought his family all the way from Australia for the celebration.

Retired housewife Freda, whose late husband Thomas was a lecturer at the Ponteland teacher training college, is a former President of Ponteland Ladies' Bowling Club and used to be a keen dancer.

Centenarian Freda Owen with Mayor Alan Varley and her birthday card from The Queen. Photos by The Image Farm.

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Head's praise for improved A level success

Students at Ponteland High have again excelled in their A-levels, improving overall results despite major changes to the assessment method.

Final grades for most courses are for the first time mostly gauged on exam performance, rather than coursework or AS levels.

Of 381 entries, 9% were graded A*, 29% received grades A*-A, 54% were grades A*-B and 75% grades A*-C (up from 69% last year). Average Points per Entry has increased from 30 to 34.

Top performer was Amber Covington with four A*s in Biology, Chemistry, Maths and Physics, and Elliott Blain, Annabel Cardno and Rosi Fisher all obtained three A*s in Biology, Chemistry and Maths.

Overall there were 15 A* grades, 32 A grades and three students received Distinction* in the vocational CTEC exams, equivalent to the A level A* grade.

Praising staff, students and parents, headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "Our staff and students have adapted incredibly well to the introduction of the new style A level qualifications. These have been purposely designed to provide stretch and challenge for all students and are clearly more difficult than previously.

"To improve on our previous outcomes in 2017 is very satisfying and something for the whole school community to be proud

of. Our students have applied themselves diligently and fully deserve their results.

"As this year group prepare to move on to further study or work I would like to thank them for the brilliant contribution they have made to our school. They have been outstanding ambassadors for our school and we all wish them every success in the future."

Local Citizens Advice offering support

The Citizens Advice service provides free, confidential information and advice on a wide range of subjects including benefits, debt, housing and employment problems.

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- by calling into our drop-in sessions – 9.30am to 3.30pm on Wednesdays – 28B Bridge Street, Morpeth, NE61 1NL
- debt advice is also available Monday to Friday on 01670 339960 or text DEBT to 81400
- by going on-line at citizensadvice.org.uk/northumberland for email advice or self-help.

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Sixty new parking spaces for Ponteland

An extra 60 car parking spaces are being created in the centre of Ponteland.

Work started to extend Merton Way car park on August 20th, creating an additional 60 parking spaces, including an extra seven disabled parking bays. The capacity will increase from 48 to 108 spaces.

The £325,000 scheme is expected to take up to ten weeks to complete and will involve closing the existing car park, either in part or wholly, for the duration of the scheme.

During the project Merton Way will be open to through traffic during the first two stages but closed to through traffic for the final stage. A diversion route will be clearly signed.

Coun Glen Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services at Northumberland County Council, said: "Ponteland, like many of our towns and villages, needs more car parking and this scheme will create much needed capacity as well as providing a boost for local traders.

"Unfortunately, as with any town centre works, there will be some disruption to residents and businesses during the works and we will, of course, endeavour to minimise this as much as possible.

"We've also ensured local schools, councillors, residents and businesses have been given advance warning of the works taking place."

Ponteland North county councillor Richard Dodd, who is contributing £56,000 from his Members Small Scheme Fund towards the project, said: "This is a very well used car park but often gets full quickly.

"With capacity more than doubling this should resolve some of the issues we have in this area and provide a car parking facility which will benefit shoppers, residents and businesses for years to come."

Students raise cash for youth project at 'Family Fun Day'

Students have raised nearly £250 towards a youth project at a family fun day.

The 16 students planned and hosted activities including football, long jump, face painting, raffles, tombola and refreshments at the event, which was the culmination of a four-stage project.

Called Team Biccies, the student group spent the first week in the Lake District concentrating on team building activities then came back to Seaton Burn for the second week focusing on confidence building workshops.

During the third week the group met with local people, the Town Council and Ponteland Community Partnership to select a community project. The group



identified that anti-social behaviour was the number one problem in Ponteland and decided to focus on raising money for a future youth project and ask the Community Partnership to use these funds for that purpose.

This was all part of the National Citizen Service Social Action Project, which

consists of a four week experience for 15 to 17 year-olds to help build confidence and self belief, giving young people the chance to embark on challenges and building skills for work and life.

Northumberland has been part of a national programme, supported by the youth service, which has inspired more than 400,000 youngsters nationally to get involved.

Alma Dunigan, chairman of Ponteland Community Partnership, said: "We have been delighted to work with this group and the youth workers. We have been overwhelmed by their efforts to raise nearly £250. The Partnership intends to keep in touch with the group's representatives and the youth service when the project has been identified as their views will be sought at that stage."

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Exhibitors compete for prizes at Parish Flower Show next weekend

Exhibitors will be competing for dozens of prizes at the 41st Ponteland Parish Flower Show next weekend.

One of the biggest events in Ponteland's annual calendar, the show will be held at the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 8th, with doors open to the public at 1pm.

Classes include flowers and heathers, vegetables and fruit, children, cookery, handicrafts, woodcraft, painting, wines and photography.

Exhibitors will be able to bench their exhibits on Friday (September 7th) from 7am until 9pm and on Saturday (September 8th) from 8am until 11am.

Full report to follow in the October issue.

A basket of produce at last year's show. Photo by The Image Farm.



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



The withdrawal of plans for 400 new homes on green belt land is welcomed in this month's letters...

Scrapping of 400-home green belt scheme welcomed

The decision by Banks Property to withdraw the widely contested plans to build 400 houses on green belt land is welcomed.

It has been a privilege to be part of a campaign that has brought the community together like never before. Ponteland Town Council, Green Belt Group, Civic Society, and the Community Partnership have worked collaboratively throughout the campaign. County councillors have supported us in our approach.

Ponteland residents have been consistent in their support. Many of you have given up time to deliver leaflets and to object to planning applications and the previous Draft Local Plan (now withdrawn). The generous support and contribution from residents has been overwhelming. Thank you.

We are waiting to see how the Lugano situation develops; we know that we have strength when we all work together and we are ready to adopt this approach should the Dissington Garden Village application continue.

The current NCC administration is confident that green belt deletion is not required and is working toward a more realistic housing supply for our county. The new Draft Local Plan offers protection to our green belt.

Tony Noble
Ponteland Green Belt Group

Support for mum's call to retain skate park

I should like to support Jayne Caldwell and her son writing about the skate park on Callerton Lane.

I look straight out of our kitchen window towards the playground and skate park. It is good to see how much enjoyment the children get from these facilities and I hope that when the proposed building work is complete both areas will be restored, possibly with further improvement.

Young children are happy in the playground but older ones need adventurous and social activities, both of which are provided when they meet up in the skate park.

I enjoy watching them but when they have gone and nobody is looking I hurry down and have a go myself!

Christine Harris
Dunsgreen (Supergran)

Failure to prosecute speeders not an argument against one-way system

Peter Sutcliffe counsels against considering a one way system in Darras Hall on the grounds that our police force fails to deter speeding drivers and so we require oncoming traffic to keep the speed down (Pont News issue 155).

In Northumberland County Council's draft Local Plan a strategic objective is "to improve connectivity and movement".

I suggest that one way systems on Darras Road and Middle Drive would be a simple step

towards that aim and would be associated with other benefits. Are we to be prevented from thinking about improvements because our police force fails to enforce the law of the road?

Peter Watson
Meadowvale, Ponteland

Group's appeal for new members

We are an international local U3A group of people, living locally who are retired or part time employed and who still wish to be active and to learn.

There are about 300 members here in Ponteland. We meet monthly on the first Wednesday of the month in St Mary's Church Hall at 2pm. We normally have a speaker on a topic of interest for about 45 minutes and then enjoy a cup of tea and friendly discussions.

We also have many groups who meet regularly. There are walking groups, tai chi, choral, you can learn a language, enjoy water colour, art appreciation, luncheon group, photography, gardening, scrabble, garden visiting, poetry, music appreciation, family history, reading groups, bridge, etc.

Feel free to come along to a monthly meeting where you will be made very welcome.

It will cost you nothing for the first meeting. If you decide to join us, annual membership is £8.

For more information take a look at our website at u3asites.org.uk/ponteland

October issue deadlines: Delivery of the October issue will start on Thursday September 27th and be completed by Wednesday October 3rd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Thursday September 13th. 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 October issue.

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

What's on...

Ponteland 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. On Tuesday October 2nd Phillip and Alison Hanmer will give a talk on "New Zealand North to South Dodging Earthquakes". Admission to both £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

Kirkley WI

Kirkley WI resumes meetings, following the summer break, on the first Wednesday of each month in Kirkley Hall at 7pm. On September 5th Kirkley member Polly Hunt will facilitate a musical evening. The competition is 'your favourite record'. Guests always welcome. Check out our website for more information at kirkleywi.wordpress.com

Ponteland Parish Flower Show

The 2018 Ponteland Parish Flower Show, which marks the 40th anniversary of the event, will be held on Saturday September 8th in the Memorial Hall.

Railway and Archive Films

The Railway and Archive Films screening scheduled for Saturday September 8th at Ponteland Community Hall, Thornhill Rd, has regrettably been cancelled and we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Peter Bates will talk on 'motorcycles' on Monday September 10th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday September 10th we are delighted to start the season with a talk from Peter Maguire on 'Gardens from around the world' at Ponteland Social Club (CIU), Merton Way. Doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Contact us at neegroup@agsgroups.org or on alpinegardensociety.net/groups/North-East-England or [facebook.com/groups/AGSNEE](https://www.facebook.com/groups/AGSNEE).

Ponteland WI

Ponteland WI meets in the lounge of the Memorial Hall at 7pm on the second Tuesday of the month. Our speaker on September 11th will be Mrs Langford and her topic will

be "thank you for having me". Visitors are welcome and the evening begins at 7pm.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday September 11th 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."

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday September 12th in the downstairs lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, commencing at 2pm. Demonstrator Susan Hall from Brotton has chosen as her theme 'Something New'. New members and visitors (£7) all welcome.

Ponteland Lions Club

Our next business meeting will be in Merton Hall on Wednesday September 13th at 7.30pm. Visitors always welcome. We have a social meeting later in the month. Our Charity Fund bookstall will be at Waitrose on Saturday September 29th from 9am to 4pm. We also collect spectacles and hand tools at the bookstall to recycle to the Third World. If you could spare an hour to help with the bookstall, or want to find out about Lions please phone Geoff on (01661) 822532.

Scottish Country Dancing

Bullocksteads Scottish Country Dance Club meet on the third Tuesday in the month (September – April) at Dalton Village Hall from 7.30pm – 10pm. Live music and pooled supper and all welcome. Cost £35 for eight sessions. First session in Autumn term is on Thursday September 18th. For more information phone Ruth on (01661) 881654.

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 September 19th. As from October we move to the meeting room at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk or shirley@reevehill.plus.com

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday September 24th from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall we have our AGM and branch competition. Membership of the Branch and the Embroiderers Guild is open to all. You can become a member or come to a meeting as a visitor for £4. For further information contact Secretary Penny Ford at penelopeford636@btinternet.com or on 01670 788278.

Ponteland Civic Society

Our new season begins on Monday September 24th at Ponteland Club, Merton Way, at 7.30pm. This opening lecture will

be given by Margaret Dodds about the independent Tyneside Cinema on Pilgrim Street which was opened on February 1st 1937 and is the last remaining Newsreel theatre to be in full-time operation in the UK. The building is Grade II listed. We look forward to hearing much more information on the history and the operation of the cinema to the present day. Visitors welcome – charge £2.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

On Wednesday September 26th at 7pm it is hoped to have popular lecturer Carl Halliday giving a talk about his expedition to Mount Toubkal, in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. Kirkley Hall students were part of this adventure and they have returned with some stunning photography. Carl has given talks in the past that were very well received. This talk is free but needs to be confirmed so it's important that you ring 07551 974955 to ensure it will be going ahead.

Dishforth Military Wives Choir Concert

Dishforth Military Wives Choir return to the Memorial Hall for a concert recalling our brave men, so many of whom perished in the terrible carnage of WWI. For this 100th anniversary, the choir have produced a CD "Remember". In addition the organisers have sourced raffle prizes from as far away as South Africa and Australia. The concert is at 7.30pm on Saturday September 29th. Tickets costing £10 are on sale at Geoff Steven & Son Opticians, Main Street, Ponteland and online through Eventbrite. Proceeds to The Royal Society for Blind Children "Recall our old - Support our young".

Charity Zumbathon

A charity Zumbathon in aid of MND UK is being held on Saturday October 13th at Ponteland Memorial Hall from 2pm - 4pm. Tickets cost £7, with all proceeds to MND UK. Pay on the door or buy in advance - contact Lindsey Thomson-Heley on 07732 359399.

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.



Britain in Bloom judges get a wet welcome

After one of the driest summers in decades the rain decided to arrive in time for the Britain in Bloom judges' visit to Ponteland.



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We are representing Northumbria in the small town category in the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom UK Finals 2018 for the second year running, alongside Morpeth (town), Durham (small city) and Tanfield (village).

RHS judges visited 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.

More than 40 businesses, schools, community groups and dozens of volunteers have joined forces to ensure the 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.

The BiB results will be revealed at a ceremony in Belfast on October 19th.

Photos by The Image Farm.

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GRANTS – PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL

The Town Council considered the annual grant application received from the Ponteland Memorial Hall to assist towards maintenance and running costs. A grant of £6,300 was approved.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Town Council approved two recommendations from the Highways Working Party which met on July 13th. They approved the Local Transport Plan (LTP) submission for 2019-20 which is sent to the County Council each year. The top three priorities were: raised bus stops at Prestwick Road Ends on the A696 for reasons of accessibility; the installation of a pedestrian crossing at Broadway and the introduction of a scheme to improve access to Glebe Close. It should be noted that these items were requests to NCC and may not be completed. They would however remain on the LTP list of requests for Ponteland. The Council also approved the purchase of a 'Clean it up' stencil to be used to reduce dog fouling in certain areas. This would be used by the PTC contractors in problem areas.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Town Council approved a recommendation from the Environment Working Party to install solar Christmas trees at

Merton Way shopping centre on three lampposts which would be on display during the Christmas period.

AIRPORT WORKING PARTY

A Working Party had met on July 23rd to consider the Newcastle Airport Masterplan 2035. A draft response had been produced and circulated to all councillors for comment. The Council very much valued having the facility so close to Ponteland and were supportive of what the Masterplan hoped to achieve. They felt it was difficult to comment on the wide-ranging nature of the document and raised some concerns around possible traffic, parking, noise and litter issues. Councillors agreed the draft response for submission to the Airport by the deadline of September 13th.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Dodd reported that the Local Plan consultation process ended on August 15th. He reported that the works to the car park at the back of Merton Way would start on August 20th and whilst there would be disruption, it would be worth it for the additional parking that would be available.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on August 8th.

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Newcastle firm wins contract to build 50 new homes in Medburn

Newcastle building group Surgo Construction has secured a £14m contract to build 50 new homes in Medburn.

The firm will build the four and five-bedroom homes on a 10-acre site on behalf of developer Medburn Homes.

The development, designed by North Shields-based Blake Hopkinson Architecture, will be known as Medburn Park and built in four phases.

James Walker, managing director at Surgo Construction, said: "We have developed extensive experience over the years of building high quality new homes.

"We are now building 164

new homes at the same time, which is an impressive number of properties, given that we don't solely focus on the housing market.

"We are very pleased to announce this new project win and are hopeful it may lead to further residential development work in the future."

The first houses are expected to be ready for occupation in January 2019, with the full construction programme due to conclude in September 2020.

Merton Hall appealing for donations for Air Ambulance Service

Merton Hall is a drop off centre for the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

The charity is having problems with their bags being stolen when left outside for collection and have asked for help.

The bag can be filled with clothing, handbags, belts, footwear and household textiles such as curtains, towels and bed linen. However, they do not accept duvets or pillows.

All bags can be left at Merton Hall, Monday-Friday 9am - 11.30am. They will then be collected by the GNAAS.

All people dropping bags for GNAAS at Merton Hall can also enjoy a free cup of coffee.



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Participants sought for charity wall walk

A charity which supports young cancer patients with no hope of a cure is seeking participants for a charity walk along Hadrian's Wall.

Josie's Dragonfly Trust funds cash gifts and special events to help the children create precious and lasting memories with family and friends.

It was founded in 2007 by Cliff and Jacqui Grove in memory of their daughter Josie Madeline Grove shortly after she passed away aged 16.

The Trust has selected the 'best bits' of Hadrian's Wall to offer a manageable weekend walking event. It is taking place on September 15th and 16th, starting at Gilsland and finishing at Chollerford with an overnight stay at The Sill.

The two day walk is 22 miles, with the option of doing only the one day 12-mile walk on the Sunday.

More about the event and the charity can be found at josiesdragonfly.org/hadrians-wall-weekend or by emailing info@josiesdragonfly.org or calling (01434) 602043.



Josie Madeline Grove



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