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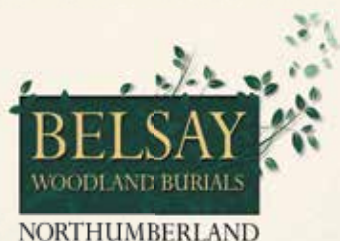


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over garden village dispute

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Huge buzz of excitement at new school opening



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Children thrilled at new £5.8m school opening

Children are enjoying state-of-the-art facilities in Darras Hall following the opening of the estate's new primary school.

The £5.8m building boasts 15 classrooms, learning streets on both the ground and first floor, music/dance/drama studios, a multi-purpose sports hall and a library and reading area.

Outside it has a wildlife and garden area for the children to grow their own vegetables and a large outdoor classroom, with a playing field and two multi-use games areas due for completion at the end of this year.

Headteacher Victoria Parr said: "There has been a huge buzz of excitement, not only in school, but within the community, since the first spade went into the ground a year ago. The children watched and learned about the build as it progressed, so they were thrilled when the day came to finally move in.

"Over 400 people attended our Community Open Day in August and it was fantastic to see so many members of the Darras Hall community, including past parents and pupils. A school is more than bricks and mortar - Darras Hall has always been an exceptional school due to its pupils, staff and community, but now we have a building to match."

The new primary school is part of a wider £57m investment in education and leisure facilities which will also include a new leisure centre, library and secondary school on Callerton Lane.

Photos by The Image Farm





Developer serves writ on county council over handling of garden village scheme plans

A developer behind plans for a 2,000-home garden village on the outskirts of Ponteland has served a writ at the High Court in London against Northumberland County Council.

The legal action is against both the authority and Council Leader Peter Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Resilience Councillor John Riddle, and Chief Executive Daljit Lally.

Lugano Group alleges that they “have acted improperly and unlawfully, abusing their powers and authority as public officers of the Council” and that this “amounts to Misfeasance in Public Office and as such has caused Lugano a serious financial loss and damages amounting to almost £10m”.

The firm has made a series of allegations, which the council has strenuously denied, in two lengthy letters to the head of legal services. They 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, which has engaged leading international law firm Pinsent Masons and a specialist QC, said they had written to the Secretary of State asking him to intervene and had reported the matter

to the Crown Prosecution Service and Northumbria Police.

Calls for an independent inquiry into the allegations 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.

The allegations first emerged in May after the announcement that the decision by the council’s Strategic Planning Committee under the previous Labour-led administration in March 2017, that it was ‘minded to approve’ the scheme, was being revisited.

The planning application would normally have been then 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 18 months on.

Instead, the county council scrapped the Core Strategy and have replaced it with a new Local Plan currently being consulted on which has removed proposals in the previous Core Strategy to enable housing development on more than 400 hectares of green belt land.

It proposes nearly 7,000 less homes to be built over the next two decades across the county, which the council says means green belt development is not needed. It is this policy change which the authority says necessitates reconsideration of the planning application.

The county council has consistently denied the allegations of misconduct, describing them as “inappropriate, untrue and defamatory” and saying senior officers and politicians were “appalled” and “astounded” they were made public.

The authority is taking legal advice and has agreed 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.

Despite the ongoing legal action, both the county council and Lugano say they intend to continue to work together on the planning application.

Lugano’s Executive Chairman Richard Robson, describing the serving of the writ as ‘a last resort’, said: “Dissington Garden Village is a highly regarded project that will act as a driver of economic growth, a creator of new jobs and a means of delivering much needed affordable homes and infrastructure improvements.

“Our objective remains to continue to work in partnership with Northumberland County Council to deliver Dissington Garden Village in accordance with the decision of their own Strategic Planning Committee; the Government’s Garden Communities Programme and the region’s need to deliver economic growth and homes in sustainable locations.”

A Northumberland County Council spokesperson said: “We are aware of further correspondence from the Lugano Group, and continue to take legal advice in this regard. As previously stated, 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.



Gardeners triumph over the weather again

By David Goodchild

Once again the gardeners of Ponteland have taken all the weather can throw at them and triumphed!

The cold spring and long hot summer raised concerns that entries would be reduced, but there were excellent displays of fruit, flowers and vegetables.

The 515 entries from 120 exhibitors, including many children, included large numbers of tomatoes, beans, apples and plums as well as the usual high standard of craftsmanship.

Notable trophy winners include Matthew Cassidy who took three; the best exhibit in handwriting, the best exhibit in children's classes and most points in the children's classes.

Aléa Stewart-Ollerenshaw shared the WI Salver for most points in handicrafts, while Keith Bisset took both the best exhibit in vegetable classes and most points in flower classes. In wood carving the trophy for best exhibit went to Janet Lawlor for her beaded bracelet.

We hope the gardeners, cooks, craftspeople and photographers of Ponteland are already planning their exhibits for next year's show which, as always, will be in the Memorial Hall on the second Saturday in September.

Photos courtesy of Colin Morgan.



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TV documentary features Ponteland teenager's tragic death

The death of a Ponteland teenager in a Manchester canal in March has been featured in a BBC television investigation into a series of similar tragedies.

Charlie Pope, 19, was found in Rochdale Canal on Friday March 2nd, having gone missing in the early hours of the previous day after leaving the Zombie Shack bar.

Shockingly, the University of Manchester student is one of 118 people to have died in Greater Manchester's canals and waterways since 2008, with 22 of these deaths in the area Charlie perished.

In June, just three months after his death, 19-year-old Orlando Nyero's body was found in the same stretch of the canal.

Charlie's devastated parents Nick and Andria and siblings Joe and Daisy are campaigning for new safety measures and have backed a change.org petition calling for barriers to be installed around the canal banks, which has amassed nearly 100,000 signatures.

The BBC North West Inside Out programme ran a feature earlier this month looking into the potential causes of the deaths and whether they were preventable. Theories included an urban myth that there was a 'Manchester Pusher'.

Nick, a finance director for a local commercial furniture firm, said: "I don't really subscribe to the pusher theory. There is no evidence for it and it can deflect from what I believe is the real reason for all these deaths - an appalling lack of safety barriers and equipment along the canal towpaths.

"The Manchester Water Safety Partnership commissioned a safety review and survey of the whole inner city waterways, which should be published in the next couple of weeks. I have been told there have been 40 deaths there in ten years - that is one every three months!

"That is an appalling record for any city to have on their conscience when there are steps that can be taken to prevent it.

"Charlie's inquest is unlikely to be until next year we have been told. We have had the police report and it confirms what



Daisy, Andria, Joe, Nick and Charlie Pope.

we knew, that he had been on a student night out and had been drinking and got separated from his mates.

"How or why he ended up by the canal we don't know, but the area was treacherous that night with ice and snow and pitch black. We believe he lost his bearings and fell in as there were no barriers there.

"I've always said that students need to take responsibility for their own and their friends' welfare, however cities also have a duty of care to protect people who use the city centre.

"The night time economy is vital to the prosperity of most cities. All I am asking



Charlie with his sister Daisy.

for is that they put a bit back in the form of deterrents, prevention and monitoring people's safety."

Follow the campaign on Twitter using hashtag #MakeCharlieTheLast and support the petition at change.org/p/put-barriers-up-on-the-manchester-canals.



Joint police force operation to crack down on rural crime



By PC Ingrid Clayton, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

September saw the Tynedale Neighbourhood Team work together with local farmers, gamekeepers and other local volunteers for Operation Checkpoint.

The successful operation was carried out in conjunction with the Durham, Lancashire and North Yorkshire police forces, working together to tackle rural crime. It enabled the police to continue to build a strong relationship with our local community, increasing information and intelligence, providing reassurance and preventing crime.

New speed limit in Darras Hall

I was fortunate enough to be invited along to the Darras Hall Estate Committee meeting; it was lovely to meet a group of residents who really want to help keep our community safe. We discussed a number of concerns, including parking, speeding restrictions and crime.

Please let me draw your attention to new speeding restrictions of 20mph on Middle Drive outside of Darras Hall Primary

School, as well as new parking restrictions and no stop signs Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm.

These restrictions and lower speed limits are there to keep our roads safe. As always, our Community SpeedWatch will be assisting the police - ensuring drivers are keeping to the speed limit.

Crime figures

The following crimes were recorded for Ponteland and the surrounding area between August 17th and September 16th:

- Attempt burglary dwelling – two
- Theft – two
- Arson – one
- Public order – one
- Criminal damage – one
- Theft from motor vehicle – one
- Burglary (other than dwelling) – one.

For detailed crime figures visit the Northumbria Police website at northumbria.police.uk and please report any suspicious persons, incidents or crimes via 101 or 999 in an emergency.

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Busy month for Mayor as he attends THREE 100th birthday parties

By Muriel Sobo and Chris Jennings

Ponteland is clearly blessed when it comes to grand old ladies.

For busy Mayor Alan Varley has met four of our oldest residents celebrating their 100th birthdays in just over a month!

After surprising centenarian Freda Owen at Meadowfield Park retirement development with a bouquet of flowers in August, Coun Varley had three more parties to attend in a very special week of celebration.

First he joined family and friends at the tea party at Ponteland Manor care home where popular former district and parish councillor Vera Lonsdale was celebrating her centenary.

Vera and her husband spent ten years in Bahrain after the war and came back to Heddon where she was elected a councillor to the Castle Ward Rural District Council. Vera continued as a councillor for Ponteland when she moved here in the early 1980s.

One of the first residents of Darras Mews, a development she supported for older people, Vera had many happy years there before moving to a bungalow on Thornhill Road and then to The Manor during the last year.

Vera is gregarious and knows many local people and of course most of us who participate in Ponteland clubs and events know Vera! All of us offer our best wishes and thanks to Vera for who she is and what she has achieved.

The following day Coun Varley attended another 100th birthday party at Grange Lea Rest Home. Olive London was also joined by her daughter Joyce and son-in-law Harry, and nephew David and his wife Rosemary.

And the Mayor was back at Grange Lea the following weekend to bring another bouquet of flowers – this time to centenarian Rita Gibson.

Photos by The Image Farm and Barry Pells Photography.



Mayor Alan Varley presents a bouquet to Rita Gibson at her 100th birthday party.



Centenarian Vera Lonsdale with Mayor Alan Varley and her birthday card from The Queen.





Above: Olive (centre) is pictured with (l-r) son in law Harry Parvin, Mayor of Ponteland Alan Varley, daughter Joyce Parvin, and Rosemary and David White (Olive's nephew and his wife).
Right: A young Olive serves servicemen on a train in 1942 during WWII.



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Car parking problems and speeding drivers in this month's letters...

Pub forced to introduce car park management

As many will have noticed from the signs recently erected at The Blackbird, we have engaged the services of a company to manage our car park.

We felt we had no alternative than to take this action in order to ensure that spaces remain available for customers whilst visiting our premises.

In recent months the already difficult situation has worsened with many reports of genuine customers driving away due to the car park being full, and with many of those vehicles not being customers.

We even had an incident where a funeral party arriving at The Blackbird was unable to park due to non-customers taking up the spaces.

Most will also be aware that there are new flats being built immediately adjacent to our car park and having checked the number of parking spaces for second cars and visitors it is inevitable that spaces will be sought in nearby properties (including ours).

Whilst we appreciate there is a lack of parking in the village this is of course an issue for the local authority to address.

We will however continue to assist a number of local organisations by providing free access; this includes Sunday morning worship at St Mary's and parents dropping their children off in the mornings.

However we cannot extend this to the collection of children in the afternoons for both availability and safety reasons.

The system we have adopted requires our customers to sign in upon arrival in order to prevent a parking charge being levied, which we believe causes little inconvenience.

The implementation of this should ensure that there is always a space for our guests and, as previously, should you have 'one too many' we would encourage you to leave your car in our car park until the following morning.

We trust that all customers and local organisations will soon get used to the system.

Stuart Young, Director

Blackbird Inn, North Road, Ponteland

November issue deadlines: Delivery of the November issue will start on Monday October 29th and be completed by Thursday November 2nd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday October 15th. 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 November 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.

Police need to tackle speeding - not volunteers with speed guns

Here, here, I couldn't agree more with Peter Watson's letter that the police should enforce the law on speeding down Middle Drive, Darras Hall, and other major Ponteland roads.

Far better than relying on volunteers with speed guns and then just sending advisory letters.

I understand in North Road recently that our valiant volunteers 'caught' circa 15 speeders in just one hour!

So, let the police mount speed traps on Middle Drive and Darras Road.

But I am a realist and will not be holding my breath. I appreciate they have a lot of other things to do with limited resources.

A one way system may ease traffic but will undoubtedly encourage more speeding, leading to accidents unless it is combined with other constructive, traffic calming methods including police speed traps.

Peter Sutcliffe

Middle Drive, Darras Hall



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What's on...

Ponteland Wildlife Group

On Tuesday October 2nd at 7.30pm at Ponteland Community Hall, Phillip and Alison Hanmer will give a talk on 'New Zealand North to South Dodging Earthquakes'. Admission £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

Ponteland Leisure Learning (U3A)

At 2pm on Wednesday October 3rd at Ponteland Community Hall, Thornhill Road, Norman Kirkland will talk on 'Customs of the Victorian North'. On Wednesday November 7th Kitty Anderson speaks on 'Capability Brown and Kirkharle'. Visitors always welcome; no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland or call (01661) 824953.

Kirkley WI

We meet at Kirkley Hall on the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm. On October 3rd we will be holding our AGM when we will reflect on the past year's activities and look ahead to next year. Guests always welcome. Visit: kirkleywi.wordpress.com

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our Autumn Show will be held from 11am until 4pm on Saturday October 6th at the Memorial Hall, where several rare plant nurseries will be selling plants. Entry £3 adults; children/AGS members free. At 7.30pm on Monday October 8th at Ponteland Social Club (CIU) we welcome Brian Burrows who will talk on 'Growing and propagating alpinists in the North of England'. Charge to visitors £2. Contact: neegroup@agsgroups.org or alpinegardensociety.net/groups/North-East-England or [facebook.com/groups/AGSNEE](https://www.facebook.com/groups/AGSNEE).

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Doug Collender will talk on 'Film as a Time Capsule' on Monday October 8th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall.

Ponteland WI

Our speaker at 7pm on Tuesday October 9th in the lounge of the Memorial Hall will be Freda Thompson with a talk and slideshow about the Suffragette movement.

Ponteland Village WI

We recently celebrated our fifth birthday and are a growing group with a wide range of activities. Our subgroups include monthly dining out, monthly walks and visits to the cinema or theatre. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm at Ponteland Community Hall,

Thornhill Road. On Tuesday October 9th we will have a talk by the national charity Bloodbikes. Contact: pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or find us on Facebook.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Our next meeting will be held in the downstairs lounge at Ponteland Memorial Hall at 2pm on Wednesday October 10th when Kathleen Gibson from Blaydon will illustrate her theme 'Myths and legends'. New members and visitors (£7) all welcome.

Ponteland Lions Club

Our next business meeting will be in Merton Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday October 10th. Visitors welcome. We have a social meeting later in the month. Our charity fund bookstall will be at Waitrose on Saturday October 27th from 9am to 4pm, where we also collect spectacles and hand tools for recycling to the Third World. We need help with the bookstall. Could you spare a hour? Contact Geoff on (01661) 822532.

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.

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 to 10pm. Live music and pooled supper and all welcome. Cost £35 for eight sessions. 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 Memorial Hall at 7pm on Wednesday October 17th (please note new venue). Contact: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Ageing Well Winter Warmer

Join us for a cuppa and a chat, find out more about staying active, safe and well, get help with iPads and mobile phones, and obtain advice on financial support available for older people. Free cuppa and cake for all who come to this event from 9.30am to 12noon on Thursday October 18th at Merton Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9PX. See our advert on p14.

Ponteland Memorial Hall fundraising evening

A fundraising evening is being held at the Memorial Hall on Friday October 19th. Gather your friends and family together for a quiz night followed by a pie and pea supper plus bar. Tickets are available at the Memorial Hall office costing £10 by email at info@pontelandmemorialhall.com or call (01661) 822603. Please support this vital community asset.

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday October 22nd from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall we have a talk and workshop 'Christmas Traditions and make a bauble' with Helen Winthorpe Kendrick. All welcome, £4. Contact: Secretary Penny Ford penelopeford636@btinternet.com or (01670) 788278.

Bridge Club

We would like to welcome new members to our friendly bridge club which meets every Tuesday until the end of April. Contact Mary Oldfield (01661) 821769.

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.

Business leader opens SME support hub in Ponteland

A new SME support hub which will help to inspire the start-up, scale-up and expansion ambitions of entrepreneurs across the region has been opened in Ponteland.

The SME Centre of Excellence offers services to growing businesses including accountancy, legal advice, HR, websites and digital marketing, as well as providing hot-desking and virtual office space, workshops and advice surgeries - all delivered by the best in industry.

It is the brainchild of leading

entrepreneur Ammar Mirza, who was awarded a CBE in 2014 in recognition of his efforts to support and enhance the North East business community.

He said: "The North East is a region famed for its entrepreneurial spirit and world-changing inventions, and we continue to make waves internationally in so many sectors through the inspirational work of the businesses we have based here today. This really is a fantastic place to do business, and through the opening of the SME Centre of Excellence, we hope to inspire the creation and growth of many more ambitious and successful ventures."

"We see this centre as having a key role to play in the Northern Powerhouse, with us being a 'one stop shop' for the needs of all SMEs, at whatever stage of their development, to help them truly recognise and unleash their potential."

The centre, on Main Street, was officially opened by Councillor Peter Jackson, leader of Northumberland County Council. For more information visit: smecofe.com

Coun Peter Jackson with Ammar Mirza at the launch of the SME Centre of Excellence


A photograph of a family (father, mother, and two children) lying on a green lawn, playing with a soccer ball. The text 'bringing lawns to life' is written in a cursive font over the image.

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Latest news from Ponteland Town Council

Whole community encouraged to take part in WW1 commemorations

Preparations for the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War are going well, councillors have been told.

The whole Ponteland community is being encouraged to take part in a series of events in November being held to mark the centenary.

The Clerk and Councillor Karen Overbury gave a report to September's meeting of the Town Council on progress on planning for the commemoration, including discussions with Reverend Allinson.

Letters have been sent out to care homes in Ponteland offering a small grant towards the cost of organising an event for their residents.

Coun Overbury agreed to deliver letters to businesses on Main Street and Bell Villas to request their involvement in decorating their premises with an appropriate theme during November. Reminders have also gone out to the primary and middle schools regarding a poster competition.

The 'there but not there' perspex silhouettes have been delivered to each of the five churches in Ponteland and two silent soldiers have been acquired for the Memorial Hall and will go on display soon.

Poppies will also be attached to lampposts on the route of the Remembrance Day parade from the beginning of November.

A commemorative bench has been donated to Ponteland by a fundraiser of the North East War Memorials Project who had raised funds in Waitrose.

The seat will be installed at the Memorial Hall entrance before Remembrance Sunday with a small dedication service.

A school service is being held on Friday November 9th at St Mary's Church. Royal British Legion wooden crosses with the names of the fallen from the First World War will be planted by children in the Garden of Remembrance at the churchyard. Wreaths will also be placed on the three Commonwealth graves in the churchyard that morning by

the Mayor.

The order of service is being put together for the Sunday morning service, which the Choir from St. Mary's will attend, and letters were being sent out to all local organisations in the third week of September.

Finally, a beacon will be lit on the evening of November 11th on the roof of St Mary's Church and further details of this and the other events will be included in the November edition of Pont News.

CCTV system to be expanded

Councillors have agreed to fund additional CCTV for the centre of Ponteland. Extra cameras are to be installed at Merton Hall which will cover the hall, the main park entrance and up to Merton Way.

The hall trustees have supported the move. Repairs have also been carried out on the existing CCTV system and councillors agreed to proceed with a maintenance agreement which would include an annual check and clean of the equipment.

Northumberland County Council update

Work on the new £46m combined schools and leisure development on Callerton Lane is due to start in November, following the appointment of a main contractor.

County councillor Richard Dodd also reported to town councillors that the new Darras Hall Primary School had opened in September, and that work to create additional car parking spaces at the back of Merton Way was progressing. Plans to provide temporary parking during the work period are being examined.

Change of opening hours at Town Council offices

The Town Council offices are no longer open on Fridays and are now open Monday to Thursday from 9.30am until 1pm.

Any Town Council related queries can be sent to enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk and if a query relates to a Northumberland County Council service such as planning, highways, potholes, education, social services etc please contact them direct on 0345 600 6400.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on September 12th.



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FREE EVENT



Practice going from strength to strength

Following the expansion of Higgins and Winter Dental Practice into neighbouring premises, a complete refurbishment has allowed space for more state-of-the-art equipment and additional team members.

The practice now has an on-site cone beam scanning suite for dental implant patients, an iTero 3d scanner for digital examinations (which avoids the need for old fashioned impressions for Invisalign and cosmetic cases), and even greater capacity to provide high quality personalised dental care for our patients.

In addition, we now have the whole site for car parking – a huge bonus given the notorious lack of parking spaces in Ponteland town centre.

However, and more importantly, there has been the opportunity to offer a position to world renowned dentist Amar Naru. Amar, who was brought up in Darras Hall, has 30 years' experience, having qualified in dentistry from the

University of Newcastle in 1988. He has a particular interest in cosmetic and reconstructive dentistry.

An expert in forensic dentistry who has a PhD in that area, Amar has been called as an expert witness in many investigations of serious crime. In that role he has travelled internationally to coordinate the identification of plane crash victims, and has also written and illustrated bestselling dental textbooks.

Dentists Kevin Higgins and Richard Winter are delighted at the new appointment.

Kevin said: "Not only is Amar a world renowned expert in forensic dentistry, he is a fantastic dentist with great

interpersonal skills. It was really important for us to look for the right person if we were going to develop our team further. Amar fits the bill perfectly."

Richard added: "Amar works closely with other colleagues to deliver the best possible personalised dental care. His wealth of experience is in helping patients with their care and shows in the way that he takes time to explain procedures to those considering treatment.

"His arrival also means we can now offer even more flexible appointment slots for patients, which are in increasing demand. With the practice expansion and the appointment of Amar, we really are going from strength to strength."

Higgins & Winter
Dental Practice

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info@higginsandwinter.co.uk

Higgins & Winter Dental Practice, 17 Bell Villas, Ponteland, NE20 9BD

Ponteland High School

Admissions information for 2019-20

If you would like to attend an Open Morning please confirm via email to Carol Wilson, Head's PA (phs@ponthigh.org.uk)

Website:
ponthigh.org.uk

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Background

In September 2019 Ponteland High School will become an 11-18 secondary school. For the first time we will enrol students in year 7 and year 8 so that they spend their formative secondary years with us before embarking on their GCSE studies. We firmly believe this continuity will benefit our students as they progress through the school.



New school build

In September 2020 we move into a brand-new school building that features a primary school, secondary school and leisure centre. This will provide the high-quality learning environment that our students and staff deserve.

Work on the proposed site is scheduled to begin before the end of the year and the school will be complete for September 2020.



Parents of Year 6 children

We are holding a series of Open Mornings in school for parents to see the school in action. You are welcome to bring your child with you.

**Monday 1 – Thursday 4 October (incl)
10.00-11.30am**

Year 6 Open Evening

Thursday 4 October (6.00-8.00pm)

There will be a talk by the Headteacher at 6.00pm, repeated at 7.00pm. The rest of the evening provides an opportunity to visit curriculum areas and talk to staff and students.



Parents of Year 7 & 8 children

We are holding a series of Open Mornings in school for parents to see the school in action. You are welcome to bring your child with you.

**Monday 8 – Thursday 11 October (incl)
10.00-11.30am**

Year 7 Open Evening

Wednesday 10 October (6.00-8.00pm)

Year 8 Open Evening

Thursday 11 October (6.00-8.00pm)

On each evening there will be a talk by the Headteacher at 6.00pm, repeated at 7.00pm. The rest of the evening provides an opportunity to visit curriculum areas and talk to staff and students.

Admissions process

We will be accepting applications from all local schools (primary and middle). Please note that this process is managed by Northumberland County Council and not the school.

Applications are made via Northumberland County Council

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/Admissions.aspx> for Northumberland residents.

Applications are made via Newcastle Council - <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/education-and-learning/admissions-and-school-transfers> for Newcastle residents.

The deadline for applications is 31 October 2018.



‘Incredible’ performance to support cancer mum’s charity run

A group of female superheroes enjoyed an incredible Great North Run experience to support a Ponteland mum’s charity goal.

The 15 women in fancy dress as Incredibles superhero mum Elastigirl certainly stood out as they completed the world’s biggest half marathon on September 9th – featuring on the BBC1 coverage of the event.

They were led by Alison Guadagno from Ponteland, who is raising funds for her employer the Great North Children’s Hospital and The Brain Tumour Charity, and included Alison’s sister Caroline from Scotland.

Like character Helen Parr (Elastigirl) in the animated film, Alison is also a married mother-of-three. But last December she was given the devastating news she had a brain tumour following a seizure at home.

The news came totally out of the blue just days before Christmas, with no previous signs of illness and no family history.

And having just finished six months of gruelling chemotherapy treatment, after initial surgery and radiotherapy, her finish time of 2hr 8min was remarkable.

But Alison reserved praise for her fellow runners, some of whom had never run more than a few miles before. She said: “I am so proud of these girls. They don’t know what they have done for me - they have been an amazing support. I couldn’t have done it without them.”

Twelve of the 15 women live in Ponteland and the idea for the group running together dressed as the Incredibles came from their regular morning runs followed by coffee and cake at Davidson of Darras Hall – hence their nickname ‘the Cappuccino Crew’.

Group member Andrea Banner paid tribute to their leader. She said: “Alison has astounded us all with her resilience and positive attitude. Her quiet determination to keep going as normal has been an inspiration to us all. She has never complained about feeling down or feeling poorly.

“Alison runs whenever she is able, only skipping a session when the treatment has made her feel out of sorts. She is a very fine example of how a positive outlook can help us all to live life to the full and to achieve the best that we can.”

Alison, 44, is one of the founder members of Ponteland Runners

and last year completed the GNR in a PB of 1hr 45min. She is currently considering her next challenge, with other fun runs and the London Marathon in her sights. But this is all dependent on her future health.

Alison said: “I don’t know what the future holds. The tumour may return but for now I am living life to the full. If I run I feel I am alive. I would love a miracle – the biggest thing you can have is hope. But I am realistic; I am a doctor.”

More than £7,000 has been raised so far for Alison’s fundraising appeal, and she wishes to thank everyone who has made a donation. Others can be made at: justgiving.com/fundraising/alison-guadagno4

Ponteland volunteers rewarded with Royal garden party invite

A group of volunteers from Ponteland were rewarded for their community contribution with an invitation to a Royal garden party.

They were among 250 nominees, along with their guests and dignitaries, to attend the Lord Lieutenant's Annual Garden Party at Alnwick Garden with His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

The annual event – now in its fifth year – is held to recognise and thank the county's carers and volunteers for their valuable contribution to the local community. Nominations for invitations are received via Deputy Lieutenants from across the county and directly from charities, organisations and individuals.

The Ponteland nominees included: Iain Evans - Ponteland Scouts; Alma Dunigan, Frank Harrington and Heather Forshaw - Ponteland Community Partnership's 'Old Railway Line Project'; Yuvraj Chauhan - Youth Ambassador, Ponteland Community Partnership; Sheila and Alan Pagan - organising the annual 'Edwardian Ball'; Lesley Hughes - Ponteland Brownies; Sara Pagan and Lucinda Porter - Ponteland Guides; Juliet Phipps - Guides and Rangers; and Councillor Christine Greenwell representing volunteers.

In his address Prince Charles said Northumberland was very special to him, especially being patron of Alnwick Garden. He said it gave him enormous pleasure to attend and thanked the



Duchess of Northumberland for the annual event, reminding the audience that his parents attended the first Lord Lieutenant's Garden Party five years ago.

The Prince also paid tribute to the wide range of organisations and charities and the work they do, very often unseen and unheard but much appreciated.

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Home Carer - Community based role

Please be advised a Driving Licence is essential for the above role.

Providing care and support to older people and adults in the community to help them achieve their personal aims and objectives in accordance with their individual support plans.

This may take place in a variety of settings, predominantly in the person's own home but this may include supporting the Service User to access community activities and other services such as education, sports, leisure, other day care activities or appointments.

This role attracts a permanent contract with guaranteed weekly hours that are flexible and fair. Ideal for those with other commitments.



The role is predominantly in Ponteland but there may be opportunities across Jesmond, Gosforth, Whitley Bay and North Shields.

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Great response to Merton Hall appeal for donations

There has been an excellent response to an appeal in last month's Pont News for donations of clothes and household textiles for the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

The charity has been having problems with their bags being stolen when left outside for collection and have asked for help. Merton Hall agreed to be a drop off centre.

And after last month's appeal 24 bags were dropped off in the first week!

GNAAS bags 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.

Volunteers sought for bulb planting day

Volunteers are again being sought for a bulb planting morning as part of the ongoing restoration of the old railway line.

Ponteland Community Partnership needs help to plant wild daffodils and snowdrops wild primroses from Callerton Lane to Rotary Way. It is one of the last stages in the two year restoration of the wildlife corridor and heritage trail.

Anyone able to help on Saturday October 13th from 10am until 12noon can get in touch at pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk and use the contact form to register interest.

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Former GB triathlete gives disabled children a day to remember

A former Great Britain triathlete is helping give local children with disabilities the opportunity to take part in the event she loves.

Jo Shallcross, from Ponteland, was inspired to organise a triathlon tailored to the individual needs of North East children

after seeing a disabled child enjoying the event in Hawaii.

With the help of her friend Tracey Sample from Amble, The Children's Disability Triathlon in Newcastle is now in its fifth year and growing in popularity.

It is designed especially for children with disabilities who would normally be challenged by the thought of doing the event and gives them the chance to take part in a traditional triathlon – swimming, cycling and running – by adapting distances according to ability and with all the support they need.

Jo, a coach and director of Kirkley fitness business The Barn, now mainly races Ironman or 70.3 (half Ironman).

She said: "It's really special seeing the children come back year after year and you get the biggest hugs when they come in. They're just so happy to be back again. It's like a highlight of their year and I know it is for me and Tracey. We just love it and it's so, so worth doing.

"Every year the children push themselves to the max. Even if their health is deteriorating a little bit they still come and do whatever they can do on the day. It's great to see how much taking part means to them."

The Children's Disability Triathlon is sponsored by Team Valley-based SOS Group, which provided medals and t-shirts for all participants as well as a video of the day.

This year, there were 35 participants and the youngest was aged just six. There was also a small group of young adults trying the triathlon for the first time.

Newcastle swimmer and European gold medal winner Nick Pyle and former Newcastle United goalkeeper Steve Harper helped present the medals at the end of the triathlon.

Steve said: "This is such great day. It's brilliant to give these kids the opportunity to swim, ride and run no matter what their ability. It's amazing to see the smiles on their faces and the sense of achievement they obviously get. And it's great to see them all get a medal at the end and go home very, very happy."



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