

# pontnews&views

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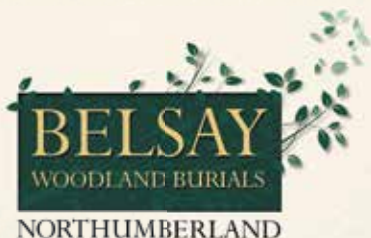
Ponteland plans fitting tribute  
for WWI centenary

.....  
Appeal lodged against  
Medburn housing refusal

.....  
New enforcement officer to  
tackle environmental offences

## Welsh win at Alpine Show





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Alan Newton from the NE England group of the AGS

# Welsh and Scottish growers the big winners at Alpine Show

**Growers from Wales and Scotland took the main honours at the annual autumn alpine plant show in Ponteland.**

Exhibitors were once again showing from across the country, with 430 alpinists on display from China, New Zealand,

Asia, Africa, South and North America and Europe.

The show also enjoyed an excellent attendance, with 280 people at the Memorial Hall on the day.

The top plant was *Empodium flexile* (this month's cover shot), which won the Farrer Medal for Bob and Rannveig Wallis from Wales, along with other prizes for *Cyclamen* and *Galanthus* (snowdrops).

Stan da Prato from Scotland won most first prizes, while a large gold award was won by Mike Dale from Felton for his photograph display 'A Floral Road Trip'.

The show is organised by the Alpine Garden Society in conjunction with the Scottish Rock Garden Club and run by the members of the NE England group of the AGS.

Photos by Barry Pells





Dr Caroline Pryer, headteacher of Ponteland Academy, and Mayor of Ponteland Coun Alan Varley with poster competition winner Edward Kay and the academy's runners-up Caitlin Dewar and Tori Bowden.

# Whole community joins to give fitting tribute on WWI centenary

*By Coun Karen Overbury*

**This year marks 100 years since the end of the First World War and Ponteland Town Council staff and councillors have been working to ensure that the village marks the occasion in a memorable and fitting way, involving people of all ages.**

The village commemoration will culminate with a Celebration of Peace on Coates Green on the evening of Sunday November 11th, with everyone urged to gather at 6.45pm. Battery-powered tea lights will be handed out to ensure an appropriate atmosphere.

A bugler will play the Last Post at 6.55pm and the Beacon will be lit on the top of St Mary's Church at 7pm, when beacons will blaze across Britain as a tribute to those who died in the 1914-1918 war.

The church bells will then be rung and St Mary's choir will lead the singing of war songs before the vicar, the Rev Capt Paul Allinson, gives a final reading and blessing.

Everyone is invited into St Mary's to see the Remembrance displays from people throughout the village. In the event of bad weather, the event will move into the church. And everyone is urged to enjoy light refreshments afterwards in

St Mary's Parish Centre (formerly known as the church hall).

The Remembrance Day parade will be held that morning, with the parade to Ponteland War Memorial leaving the leisure centre at 10.40am.

High school students Charlie Capps and Olivia Weedon-Anderson will read out the names of the village's war dead.

This year's order of service is a special one, with the winning poster of a school children's competition on the front. The posters will be on view in the Memorial Hall after the service, when light refreshments will be available for everyone.

## How the community is marking the centenary

The Town Council wanted to involve as many people as possible in the commemoration.

This is just some of what is/has been happening:

- Special service for schools at 11am on Friday, November 9.
- Poster competition for school children.
- Grants to old people's homes for tea parties to be held.
- Work in schools, including visits by the Rev Allinson.
- Poppy-themed planting over the summer throughout the village.
- Schools given planters and seeds.
- Giant poppies on lampposts on Main Street.
- Shops and business window displays.
- Wreaths to be laid on the three Commonwealth War Graves.
- A commemorative bench donated to the village.

- Two commemorative kneelers donated to St Mary's Church.
- St Mary's Church will be open 9am-5pm on Saturday and Sunday, November 10-11 for villagers to view the displays.

## Poster competition

The winner of Ponteland Town Council pupils' poster competition was Edward Kay, of Ponteland Academy.

Edward's poster won the school prize, with Tori Bowden and Caitlin Dewar runners-up.

The Darras Hall Primary winner was Chloe Petts, with Emma Ho and Alana Duncan runners-up.

The Richard Coates Primary winner was Evie Mothersdale, with Frances Elliott and Ava Campbell runners-up.

And the winner at Ponteland Primary School was Evie Nicholson, with Grace Bradley and Zac Wright the runners-up.

The competition was judged by the Mayor of Ponteland, Alan Varley, who said: "We wanted to involve people of



all ages in our commemoration and the poster competition was an ideal way of getting children involved. I was very impressed by the standard and judging was very difficult. A great deal of care, thought and passion went into the designs."





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# Appeal lodged after Medburn housing scheme refusal

**An appeal has been lodged by a developer refused planning permission for a housing scheme in Medburn.**

Last November members of Northumberland County Council's Castle Morpeth Local Area Committee turned down an outline application for 16 dwellings on land to the north of The Avenue. Officers had recommended approval, citing previous lost appeal decisions.

Ponteland Town Council had objected to the planning application for the 1.9-hectare site, along with seven residents. Concerns raised included the negative impact on highway safety and on residential amenity.

Reasons given for refusal were related to problems caused by increased traffic on a substandard road, over-development of a site appropriate only for infill development, not achieving sensitive development in keeping with low density surroundings, and not being a sustainable location for new housing development due to lack of services/facilities and extremely limited access to public transport.

Now Newcastle planning consultancy Ethical Partnership has lodged an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate against the planning refusal. A planning inspector will visit the site of the

proposed development before deciding whether to reject or uphold the appeal.

Recent planning approvals for the hamlet which have led to claims of overdevelopment by local residents, have included 50 new dwellings by Miller Homes on a 4.4-hectare site just north of The Avenue in 2016 and a new 62-home scheme by Bellway Homes on a 6.6-hectare plot of land adjacent to the opposite side of The Avenue last October.

There have also been a number of smaller housing developments dotted along the end of The Avenue which have generated complaints about problems with access to homes due to additional vehicles using the road and excessive mud and damage to verges.



## Pont High trio compete in Horse of the Year Show

**Three Ponteland High students competed in the Horse of the Year Show at Birmingham's NEC Arena.**

Year 9 student Jessica Robinson, Charlie Parker (Y10) and Lauren Robinson (Y11) are members of the Morpeth Hunt Pony Club Mounted Games Team.

The team hasn't qualified for the Horse of the Year Show in 24 years but that all changed this year; their dreams came true as they qualified for the

2018 event held in October and finished 5th overall, an amazing achievement.

Training starts almost a year before the event with friendly competitions starting in March. More than 300 teams then compete in the first qualifier in May.

Having navigated this, the team headed up to Scotland to compete against teams from Northern England, Ireland and Scotland in a number of different races to qualify for 'The World's Most Famous Horse Show'.

Lauren is the rider in the centre of the picture and Charlie Parker is far right.



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# Education Secretary officially opens new school

Pupils and staff at Darras Hall's new £5.8m primary school enjoyed a VIP visit when a Government Minister dropped in during a trip to the region.

Secretary of State for Education the Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP met pupils, teachers and local politicians as he unveiled a plaque to declare the school officially open.

Mr Hinds was given a tour of the school and saw children working in their new classrooms. Pupils then sang their school song before he was invited to unveil a plaque and say a few words to the assembled school and visitors.

The new primary school, built by Northumberland County Council, features state of the art facilities including 15 classrooms, 'learning streets' on both the ground and first floors, two multi use studios, a hall that can be used for both school and community events and a library and reading area.

An outside classroom and a wildlife and garden area will allow the children to grow their own vegetables. The school is



also set to have a playing field and multi-use outdoor play area, which are due for completion in November.

Coun Wayne Daley, cabinet member for children's services and deputy leader of Northumberland County Council, said: "We were delighted that Mr Hinds was able to join us today and to officially declare this fantastic new school open. This major investment in education in the county has created great new learning and teaching environments for pupils and staff."


Mr Hinds added: "It was a pleasure to see the infectious enthusiasm of teachers

and pupils at Darras Hall Primary School and I look forward to seeing them flourish in the coming years."


The investment into Darras Hall Primary School is part of a wider £57m investment by NCC in education and leisure across the Ponteland partnership, which includes a new leisure centre, library and primary and secondary schools set to be built on the site of the existing leisure centre (see p22).

Pictured are (back l-r) Education Minister Damian Hinds, Coun Wayne Daley, Darras Hall Primary School headteacher Victoria Parr and (front l-r) head students Laurence Hattaway, Adam Secker and Charlotte Courtney.

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# Former police HQ sold for £21m

**The former Northumbria Police headquarters in Ponteland has been sold for £21m.**

The site, no longer needed for operational policing, has planning permission for new housing; an outline application was approved in 2015 followed by two detailed schemes earlier this year for a total of 275 homes.

Prior to housing the force hq, previous uses for the site included a children's home for more than 300 children and a teacher training college. Listed buildings around the green will be refurbished and brought back into use as new homes.

Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Dame Vera Baird said: "The Ponteland site holds memories not just as a base for policing as it was utilised during the war, then it became a teacher training college and latterly a police headquarters. It's had many uses over the years, but didn't fit the needs of modern day policing.

"Tough negotiations took place to ensure the best price possible was received and every penny is going back into policing.



"Central Government cuts to our budget has meant that difficult decisions have had to be taken and the money raised goes nowhere near covering the £150m cut from Northumbria Police since 2010, but it does ensure that we can remain focused on delivering the priorities set out in the Police and Crime Plan."

Chief Constable Winton Keenen added: "We relocated much of our resource from Ponteland some time ago to ensure we could best serve our communities, whilst at the same time wrestling with

the significant levels of financial cuts we continue to experience.

"This does close a chapter for Northumbria Police, but ensures we give ourselves the best opportunity to tackle the challenges of the future."

The memorial garden has already been relocated to Middle Engine Lane in North Tyneside, which became the official new Northumbria Police headquarters in 2016.

John Leslie, estates manager for Northumbria Police and Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Dame Vera Baird.



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# Six of the best for Ponteland

Ponteland has won a gold award in Northumbria in Bloom for the sixth year running.

But the best news could be yet to come. As we went to print the results of the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom UK Finals were being revealed at a ceremony at Belfast Waterfront conference centre.

Last year Ponteland secured a silver gilt award in the 'small towns' category in its first entry to the national competition. We are representing Northumbria in BiB's small town category in for the second year running, alongside Morpeth (town), Durham (small city) and Tanfield (village).

More than 40 businesses, schools, community groups and dozens of volunteers had 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.

RHS judges visited on a wet August day to measure the standard of floral displays and the general cleanliness of Ponteland and Darras Hall, compared to 75 other Britain in Bloom finalists.

Other NiB winners included Corbridge, which also secured a gold medal in the 'small town' category. Morpeth was the overall winner in the 'town' section.

Coun Glen Sanderson, cabinet member for environment and local services at Northumberland County Council, said: "Our staff and all the volunteers who give their time have done a magnificent job and that is reflected in these awards. I am very grateful to everyone involved for everything they do in making these places that everyone can enjoy and feel proud of."



Photo by The Image Farm.



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# Your letters

The Editor  
Don't News & Views



A call for litter pickers, warning about parking tickets and a retired architect's view on what Dissington Garden Village needs in this month's letters...

## Mayor calls for litter pick volunteers

**As Mayor and Leader of Ponteland Town Council, I can tell you that all of the town councillors are actively interested in our village and take great pride in the attractiveness and appearance of the village and surrounding area.**

I think it has been a positive development for the village to have entered and won Northumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom awards.

I am also aware that real efforts are made to keep the village well maintained by Northumberland County Council, our own local Town Council contractors and by members of the general public.

Part of the work already undertaken by the community is informal litter picking by groups who regularly patrol areas. So whilst I acknowledge all of this work, I think we can and we should do better.

You do not need to look very far around our village to find all sorts of litter including cans and plastic packaging which, if not removed, will take hundreds of years to deteriorate and rot away.

My appeal to you is to ask you as residents to come forward to join teams of people who can organise regular litter picks around the village. The Town Council can provide the tools, the protective gloves, the plastic bags and dispose of the rubbish that is collected.

To do this, you simply need to register your interest by sending an email with your contact details. We will arrange for small litter pick groups to be set up around the village.

I really would appreciate your help and support with this. My wife and I really do enjoy living in Ponteland and I think a programme of regular litter picks carried out by local residents can only help all of us to value and appreciate where we live even more than we do now.

**Coun Alan Varley**

*Mayor, Ponteland Town Council*

## Beware "unfair" penalty charges during car park works

**I wish to warn people about parking around Merton Road and Thornhill Road.**

As you may be aware the car park behind the shops is being extended and parking is very difficult while this work is going on.

I have been issued with a Penalty Charge Notice for parking on a single yellow line for five minutes despite showing my wife's disabled blue badge clearly on the dashboard while escorting her to the hairdressers. My mistake was that I forgot to display a time of arrival.

It seems that Northumberland County Council in their wisdom are taking unfair advantage of the public while the construction work is being carried out, issuing as many tickets as possible.

On my PCN it states that the enforcement officer observed my car for three minutes. My wife has severe Alzheimer's causing mobility, as well as other problems.

I appealed to the county council and also mentioned it to my MP in an email. The council rejected my appeal so I have no alternative than to appeal further. You have been warned.

**Bill Howd**

*Woodend, Darras Hall*

## Garden village visual does not tell the whole story

**Thoughts on the picture in your October issue of Dissington Garden Village.**

If our current generation had to live in a remote village they would need two cars per dwelling, and not some vulnerable parking lot round the corner. The sensible solution would be a double garage with every house.

Popular open plan living-dining areas would open on to a garden area or on to a generous balcony at first floor level, and have floor-to-ceiling, folding glazed doors.

The proposals as shown have tiny windows and concrete slabs over some doorways, and cold black slate roofs which are more appropriate to industrial areas.

The front doors have iron railings or low brick walls a few feet in front of them, and are facing south with no front gardens to enjoy, and masses of people and hard paving. But people do not hang about in the street, they make straight for home. It is shopping areas, if any, which attract people.

Town planners may have been disliked in the past but they did resolve these sort of problems with developers and architects. Unfortunately, cosy little villages like nearby Walton for instance, are a thing of the past.

**Ian C Brown, architect (retired)**

*Church Flatt, Ponteland*

## Note from Lugano Group:

The image used in the article was one of the early stage computer generated images, intended for illustrative purposes only. The design and layout continue to evolve with design input from leading national experts. Each property will have suitable parking and garaging, but designed in such a way so as not to dominate the street scene or detract from landscaping. Each property will benefit from a bespoke design suitable to the plot and context. Builders will not be able to use their standard products or designs and the Princes Foundation will approve all detailed designs and materials. The Garden Village is designed as proper community with retail, leisure sports and recreation facilities as well as suitable health provision.



**December issue deadlines:** Delivery of the December issue will start on Tuesday November 27th and be completed by Monday December 3rd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday November 13th. If you are aware of any missed properties please contact the editor at [pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk](mailto: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 December 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 Wildlife Group

Paul Morrison will give a talk on 'Coquet Island - a Special Place for Birds' at 7.30pm on Tuesday November 6th in St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Rd, Ponteland. Admission £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

## Ponteland Leisure Learning (U3A)

At 2pm on Wednesday November 7th in St Mary's Parish Centre, Kitty Anderson will talk on 'Capability Brown and Kirkharle'. On December 5th we will have our Faith Tea with entertainment. Non-members always welcome, no charge. Visit [u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland](http://u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland) or ring 01661 824953.

## Kirkley WI

Our guest speaker at 7pm on Wednesday November 7th at Kirkley Hall will be Michael Taylor, talking about Prestwick's mining community. Visitors welcome. See: [kirkleywi.wordpress.com](http://kirkleywi.wordpress.com)

## Railway and Archive Films

Railway and Archive Films on a remembrance theme will be shown on Saturday November 10th at 3pm and 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre. Admission free.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Colin Buxton will talk on 'The RAF at the WW1 Battle of Amiens' on Monday November 12th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall.

## North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

At 7.30pm on Monday November 12th at Ponteland Social Club (CIU) we have Brian Burrows' talk 'Growing and propagating Alpines in the North of England'. Visitors £2. Contact [neegroup@agsgroups.org](mailto:neegroup@agsgroups.org) or visit [alpinegardensociety.net/groups/North-East-England](http://alpinegardensociety.net/groups/North-East-England) or [facebook.com/groups/AGSNEE](https://www.facebook.com/groups/AGSNEE).

## Ponteland WI

The speaker at our meeting on Tuesday November 13th at 7pm in the lounge of the Memorial Hall will be Alex Swailes MBE who will entertain us with stories and songs of Northumberland. Visitors very welcome.

## Ponteland Village WI

Our meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday, November 13th at St Mary's Parish Centre will include a talk on Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, and we're also planning our Christmas night out and festive fun for our December meeting. Find us on Facebook - Ponteland Village WI.

## Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Our major meeting of the year will take place on Wednesday November 14th at 2pm in the Memorial Hall, when Patti Dawson and Kate Russell from Penrith will demonstrate 'Christmas is Coming - Here We Go Again'. Also stalls selling plants, cakes and produce, a tombola and raffle. Visitors very welcome; £10 to include refreshments.

## 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. Our next meeting at the Memorial Hall (rear entrance) will be a week earlier at 7pm on Wednesday November 14th. Contact: [pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk](http://pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk)

## Ponteland Lions Club

Our next business meeting will be in Merton Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday November 14th. Visitors welcome. Our November social event will celebrate receiving our Charter. The annual Swimathon for local charities is on Saturday November 17th, and the monthly Charity Fund bookstall will be at Waitrose on Saturday November 27th from 9am to 4pm. Contact: 0845 833 9913.

## Ponteland Local History Society

On Thursday November 15th at 7.30pm at St Mary's Parish Centre, we have Michael Taylor's extensively illustrated talk entitled 'Seven bridges: the crossing of the Tyne gorge', which will take a not too serious look at the various crossing points of the river between Newcastle and Gateshead. This replaces Barry Mead's talk 'Stone and bones and recent discoveries around Druridge Bay' which was postponed. Visitors welcome, £2.

## Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday November 26th from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, we have a mini workshop - Punchinella Christmas card with Ann Smith. All welcome, £4. No meeting in December. Contact: Penny Ford at [penelopeford636@btinternet.com](mailto:penelopeford636@btinternet.com) or on 01670 788278.

## Ponteland Civic Society

At our meeting at 7.30pm on Monday November 26th at Ponteland CIU Club, Merton Way, we have Kevin Dunlop's illustrated talk 'Off the Beaten Track' about when he accompanied the late historian Edwin Grieve around Northumberland. Visitors welcome; charge £2.

## Tynedale Hospice at Home

All welcome to our Light up a Life remembrance service on Saturday December 8th at 3pm at St Mary's Church, Ponteland. Visit [tynedalehospice.com/event-light-up-a-life](http://tynedalehospice.com/event-light-up-a-life) or call (01434) 606 444.

## Ponteland Writers

We are a friendly group with mixed writing ability and experience and meet every Wednesday evening in the Ladies Lounge at Ponteland Golf Club from 7pm to 9pm. New members welcome.

## 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.

## 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:alanhalleef@msn.com) or on (01661) 860284.

## New enforcement officer to tackle environmental offences

Ponteland is to get a dedicated Environmental Enforcement Officer with power to fine people responsible for offences including dog fouling, littering, fly tipping and graffiti.

The officer will start at the beginning of January, working two days per week – initially for 12 months.

The move follows an offer from Northumberland County Council of a part-time enforcement officer for Ponteland under a service level agreement arrangement, which the Town Council agreed.

The officer will deal with environmental issues such as dog fouling, litter, fly tipping, graffiti and waste accumulations, and assist with publicity and education in all aspects of environmental issues. They will also be able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices when offences are detected.

The Town Council will receive regular update reports on the activities carried out by the officer, and a review of the new service will be held after the first year and a decision taken then whether to continue.

## Northumberland County Council report

Updating on Northumberland County Council business, county councillor Richard Dodd told the Town Council that the contract for the school and leisure complex had been awarded and work would start shortly (see p22) and that the Education Secretary had officially opened the new Darras Hall Primary School (see p7).

He also reported that he had set up a meeting with a Senior Planning Services Officer on November 23rd to discuss the Section 106 monies for the Bellway development at the former Police HQ site, which town councillors could attend.

## Grant applications

Councillors approved a grant of £500 towards the cost of providing the annual firework display on New Year's Eve following an application from the Diamond Inn.

A further £600 was agreed for Ponteland Rotary Club towards their Christmas market being held at the Memorial Hall on December 9th. The Council also approved a grant of £150 for Community Action Northumberland to assist with their work with village halls and community centres.

## Commemoration of the end of the First World War

Plans for the commemoration of the end of the First World War in Ponteland were outlined to councillors by the Clerk and Coun Karen Overbury, including discussions held with Reverend Allinson. See details of the programme of events on p4-5.

## Roof replacement

A recommendation to replace the roof on the public toilets at Thornhill Road by the Environment Working Party, which had met on September 17th, was agreed subject to the approval of the residents of Peel House apartments as scaffolding would need to be erected on their land.

*This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on October 10th.*

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## Extended town centre car park reopens

Ponteland's Merton Way car park has reopened following extension works which have created much needed additional parking spaces.

Work started to extend the car park on August 20th, creating an additional 60 parking spaces, including an extra seven disabled parking bays. The total capacity has increased from 48 to 108 spaces.

The £325,000 scheme has taken ten weeks to complete and inevitably caused disruption to traders and shoppers alike, with closures of the existing car park during the works and traffic diversions.

Ponteland North Councillor Richard Dodd contributed £56,000 from his Members Small Scheme Fund towards the project.

A Northumberland County Council spokesman, speaking just before we went to print on October 19th, added: "Weather permitting, the main car park should be open for business by next week and the bays on the other side of the road open within a fortnight.

"There is a problem with a BT cable but it only involves five bays. This area of verge is being reinstated as was and we will come back to it later depending on the potential costs of diversion or protection of the cables. In the meantime all other bays will be usable.

"We'd like to thank everyone for their patience while the works to expand the carpark were carried out."

## Diamond Inn in line for makeover after new management deal agreed

Ponteland's Diamond Inn is in line for a makeover after a Newcastle leisure firm took over management of the venue.



The Vaulkhard Group, which operates a number of well known restaurants, bars, coffee shops and nightclubs in the region, has agreed a deal to run the landmark venue after being approached by the owners, Heineken brewery.

The Vaulkhard Group intends to run The Diamond with no immediate changes. However, the group is planning to invest in an interior refit in mid-2019.

The news came as the leisure operator was also granted a licence to open one of its Barluga branded venues, the former Loch Fyne restaurant on Gosforth High Street.

The Newcastle-headquartered group has operated in the city for more than 25 years, with family business interests dating back over 40 years.

Ollie Vaulkhard, joint owner and director of the Vaulkhard Group, said: "We are delighted that our reputation and track record helped secure the licence for Barluga in Gosforth and the Diamond in Ponteland and we're excited about welcoming customers into these venues."

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Thursday 8am - 8pm, Friday 8am - 4.30pm, Saturday 9am - 12noon

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





# Protect yourself from the fraudsters



By PC Ingrid Clayton, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

Over the last month there have been various reports of fraud and scams within the area. Please read the following advice to raise awareness and prevent others becoming a victim of crime.

## What is a scam?

A dishonest attempt by criminals to trap you into parting with your money. They usually come by post, telephone or email. Scammers are clever fraudsters who target and steal money from all kinds of people from all walks of life. There are numerous scams in existence: prize draws; lotteries; miracle health cures; investment and career opportunities; online dating; claims you owe debt/taxes to government organisations.

## Reporting a fraud

If you've been a victim of fraud, report it to the Police on 101 or 999 or make a report to the UK's national fraud reporting centre Action Fraud at [actionfraud.police.uk](http://actionfraud.police.uk) or tel 0300 123 2040. It is important that you keep all evidence eg letters, emails,

list of transactions. If a fraudster has withdrawn money from your bank account or used your debit card contact your bank immediately.

## Why contact Police or Action Fraud?

Sometimes people choose not to report fraud because they are embarrassed that they fell for a scam. Remember that fraud is a crime and that fraudsters will constantly reinvent themselves to find new ways of tricking people - anyone can be victim. Fraudsters are often part of serious organised criminal gangs who use money to fund other crimes such as human trafficking, illegal firearms and terrorism. They rely on silence; it is important to raise awareness and help our community to stay vigilant and safe.

## Tips to prevent fraud

- Do not give any personal information - name, address, bank details, email or phone number, PIN or banking password to organisations or people before verifying their credentials.
- Many frauds start with an email or phone call; do not assume this is authentic.
- Banks/financial institutions will not send you an email asking you to click on a link and confirm your bank details.
- Do not be rushed - a genuine organisation won't mind waiting.
- Listen to your instincts - you know if something doesn't feel right.
- Stay in control - don't panic or make a decision you may regret.
- Destroy/shred receipts with your card details on and post with your name and address.

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

## Check if your bin collection date is changing

**Households are being asked to check if their bin collection day is changing, following a review of Northumberland's refuse collection service.**

More than one in six of the county's 157,000 homes is affected, with changes coming on the weeks commencing October 22nd and November 12th meaning a change of collection day for 2,000 homes in Castle Morpeth. Garden waste collection dates are not affected.

Residents are being advised to ensure all bins are out by 7am as collection times could also change.

You can check if your bin collection days are changing at [northumberland.gov.uk/bins](http://northumberland.gov.uk/bins) and all affected households should also receive a new collection calendar and information in the post.



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# Girls' football team in dream Barcelona cup final

A Ponteland girls' football team is to be the first to ever represent England in an international tournament being held at Barcelona's Camp Nou next summer.

The players from Ponteland Academy secured their place in the Danone Nations Cup World Final after winning the Nations Schools' Cup for Girls at Coventry City's Ricoh Arena in May, coming top of 6,000 teams.

The girls have faced some of the most talented primary school footballers in the country in the national competition, but now have to tackle the best in the world!

The competition is the world's biggest football tournament for 10-12 year olds, and gave 32 primary school teams a taste of a 'professional football' experience playing at the former Premier League side's stadium.

Ponteland Academy (formerly Ponteland



Community Middle School) had to progress through a demanding qualifying process with the 6,000 teams, with district rounds, county rounds and regional finals to qualify for the national finals.

There they won three matches in a round robin against the other regional winners before a nailbiting semi-final was settled on penalties with the winning spot kick by

Katie Bullock. The girls then went on to beat Gerrard's Cross School 1-0 in the final.

Team England will be represented at the Danone Nations Cup World Final by four teams and Ponteland Academy will be the first ever English girls' side at a World Final.

What an amazing achievement!



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# Turnaround sees practice get clean bill of health from inspectors

**A Ponteland medical practice has been given a clean bill of health by inspectors, just 18 months after a critical report by the Care Quality Commission.**

Ponteland Medical Group, which has surgeries in Meadowfield industrial estate, at Broadway, Darras Hall, and in Dinnington, and more than 10,000 patients, was rated overall as 'good' following the CQC inspection in July.

In February 2017 inspectors had found the practice 'requires improvement', citing issues with the safe management of medicines, difficulties patients had with the appointment system, and confidentiality in the reception area.

Now, the CQC says the practice - part of the NHS Northumberland clinical commissioning group (CCG) - is well led and that its services are safe, effective and caring.

The inspection report also highlighted an area of outstanding practice; a closed Facebook group used to deliver live streamed educational sessions, to help promote staff learning and skills development.

But it recommends continued monitoring to address patients' concerns about difficulties accessing the practice by telephone and obtaining a suitable appointment, and a review of the practice website to ensure it has relevant and useful information for patients and is kept up-to-date.

Gordon Allan, a voluntary member of the practice's Patient Reference Group, said the new report showed a "significant improvement" over the previous inspection verdict.

He said: "Both clinical and non-clinical staff have worked hard over the past 18 months to improve the practice and I am delighted that their efforts have been recognised by the CQC."

Mr Allan added that the Patient Reference Group was discussing with the practice how access to appointments can be further improved, including recent changes such as the introduction of pre-booked telephone appointments and greater use of nurse practitioners.

Executive GP Dr Robin Hudson said he was "determined to improve access and the overall experience patients receive at all points of contact with the practice".

The practice will present its action plan on appointments at the next Patient Reference Group meeting in November based on patient feedback and the CQC Report.





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# Nursery enjoys special visit from Northumbria Police

Children at a Ponteland nursery enjoyed a special visit from Northumbria Police as they learned about crime fighting.

Officers from the force created a lot of excitement, bringing police horses and dogs along to Park House Nursery, and one police pup was especially pleased with all the attention he received!

The purpose of the visit was to highlight the animals' role assisting in tackling crime in the area, and to help the children feel comfortable and at ease in their presence.

The nursery thanked Inspector Gary Jones and police constables Julia Wright, Joanne Watson and Adam Fegan for arranging the visit with manager Julie Summerscales.



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# Rugby Club awards charity cash

By Ron Clarke

Three charities have been given a cash boost from Ponteland Rugby Club, with each receiving a £500 cheque.

The presentations were made at the club sponsors' lunch at Rialto's Italian restaurant in Ponteland to The Sally Allan Fund, Friends of Marie Curie and the My Name's 5 Doddie Fund.

The Sally Allan Fund was set up in memory of Sally by her husband Gordon, working in conjunction with Tyneside and Northumberland MIND to raise mental health awareness.

The Friends of Marie Curie presentation was made in memory of former player and popular club member Gareth Jones, who lost his battle against cancer in 2017, having received palliative care at the Marie Curie Hospice in his final weeks. The funds will go towards a new family unit at the charity's Newcastle hospice.

My Name's 5 Doddie Fund is raising money for the research into a cure for



Motor Neurone Disease. Former British Lion, Scotland and Newcastle Falcons player Doddie Weir was diagnosed with the disease some three years ago and continues to work tirelessly for the fund he set up.

Ponteland Rugby Club President Tony Murphy said: "It was an honour to help these charities, who all do outstanding work. The club is very much part of the community and we receive a lot

of support from the community, and this was just a way of saying thanks to everyone who has supported us."

Preparations have already begun for the 2019 Ponteland Beer Festival which will be held on the weekend of April 26th to 28th.

Ponteland Rugby Club President Tony Murphy (right) presents cheques to (l to r): Gordon Allan from the Sally Allan Fund; Jenny Pearson, Friends of Marie Curie; and Rory Bannerman, President, Hawick Rugby Club, on behalf of My Name's 5 Doddie Fund.



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# Council awards £42m contract for Ponteland schools and leisure scheme

A £42m contract to build a combined schools and leisure campus in Ponteland has been awarded to Kier Construction.

The development will see the existing leisure centre demolished and replaced with a new facility alongside a modern secondary school and primary school.

The leisure facility will include a swimming pool, fitness suite, community facilities, badminton courts, Clip N Climb, soft play, outdoor sports fields, a full size 3G pitch and a library. The development will also include a new fire station.

Coun Cath Homer, Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts, Leisure and Tourism at Northumberland County Council, said: "The investment into the schools and leisure in Ponteland will provide state-of-the-art facilities for the community and an excellent learning environment for our young people."

Brian McQuade, managing director of



Kier Construction Scotland & North-East England, said: "Our aim is to create... learning environments in which students can thrive. Throughout the duration of the project, we will work with the local supply chain and look to offer training and job opportunities as well as engage with residents to ensure that they see local benefits."

During the 11 week tendering process

preparatory work on site has included tree pruning and service investigations and newt-trapping to safely rehouse any protected species.

Temporary accommodation is being created to accommodate the new Year 7 and Year 8 intake to the existing high school in September 2019. The new development is scheduled for completion by September 2020.



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