

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Receivers appointed
for Dissington Estate amid
legal battle

.....
Anger over bank branch closure

.....
Gold award at Britain in Bloom

Young and old
join to mark
WWI centenary



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Produced by Cian creative pr

Hunt on for Dissington dog waste dumper



Council officials are investigating the flytipping of dog waste at a picturesque bridge over the River Pont.

As these shocking pictures show, what would appear to be the owner of a number of dogs or possibly a dog related business has been throwing a range of waste over Dissington Bridge near Medburn.

The rubbish strewn across the water includes large empty packs of dog food for puppies, junior and adult dogs, poo bags and even a dog carrier.

Johanna Dubois from Darras Hall, who walks her dogs in the area, reported the flytipping to Northumberland County Council.

She said: "It's obviously someone who has lots of dogs, or perhaps a kennels or another dog business. It's horrible, the mess is just hideous."

A county council spokesman said: "This has been brought to our attention on a couple of occasions by members of public who walk this area. We have referred this incident to the Environment Agency with it being within watercourse, and an Environmental Enforcement Officer has been to the location and will be visiting local properties to see if they know anything about this very concerning incident."

If anyone has any information about the flytipping, they should report online at northumberland.gov.uk/Protection/Environment.aspx#fly-tipping or contact Northumberland County Council's Environmental Enforcement team on 0345 600 640.

Johanna Dubois with the dog waste dumped at Dissington Bridge. Photos by The Image Farm.



County council denies acting unlawfully to derail garden village plans as receivers called in

Claims that the Leader and Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council acted unlawfully to derail a 2,000-home development on the outskirts of Ponteland have been vehemently denied.

Lugano Dissington Estate Limited has served a High Court writ against both the authority and its Leader Coun Peter Jackson, Chief Executive Daljit Lally and the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Resilience Councillor John Riddle, claiming nearly £10m in damages.

The firm alleges that delays to the planning process caused by “outrageous and arbitrary conduct amounting to misfeasance in public office” by all three have led to serious financial loss and damage.

The particulars of claim set out an alleged chain of events which have led to a breakdown in relations between Lugano and the county council since the local elections in May 2017 which saw a new minority Conservative-led administration take charge.

The previous minority Labour-led administration had signalled support for the Dissington Garden Village scheme, entering into a Planning Performance agreement with Lugano in April 2016 after the Government invited expressions of interest (EOIs) for garden villages. This EOI was submitted by NCC in July 2016.

A hybrid planning application was submitted to NCC in December 2016 for a 2,000-home garden village, which the authority’s Strategic Planning Committee said it was ‘minded to approve’ in March 2017. The following month the Homes and Communities Agency granted £75,000 to NCC to support the development of the project.

The expected process to follow was the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement and the referral of the application to the National Planning Casework Unit as a significant green belt departure, for a decision on whether it was to be called in by the Secretary of State for determination.

The change of leadership at the council led to the withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy, the long term planning blueprint for the county, which had been submitted to the Government for examination. The replacement Draft Local Plan removed proposals in the previous Core Strategy to delete more than 400 hectares of green belt land including on Dissington Estate, paving the way for new housing development.

The writ alleges that Coun Jackson “wilfully and dishonestly misled” a meeting of the Full Council in July 2017 by stating that the delay caused by withdrawing the Draft Core Strategy would only be two to three months when he had been advised it would be 18 months to two years.

It further alleges that “improper and unlawful pressure” was placed on the then Head of Planning by Coun Riddle and Ms Lally to change the recommendation of the report on the DGV planning application when it came back to committee for redetermination – a result of the changed policy on green belt development.

Defence papers submitted to the High Court on behalf of the authority and the three named individuals categorically deny all the allegations about bullying and misleading councillors and state “... the claim against the Council is... bound to fail”.

They also point out that the planning application has not yet gone back to the Strategic Planning Committee for redetermination and that Lugano did not challenge the withdrawal of the Draft Core Strategy by judicial review.

The former Head of Planning left NCC in March 2018. Former Chief Executive Steve Mason had previously left in May 2017 with a compensation payment of £370,000, citing a new political leadership with a “radically different agenda”.

Lugano Dissington Estate Limited had purchased the 2,537-acre estate, which has 19 residential properties and six farm steadings, for £18m in 2007 and borrowed £25m in 2016 to discharge debt on the purchase and fund ongoing work promoting the scheme.

The writ claims the credit agreements were entered into with the expectation outline planning permission would be granted by October or November 2017. It states that the estimated value of the estate on receipt of outline planning permission or the adoption of the Core Strategy would have been £190m.

Confirmation of a date for the High Court hearing has not yet been given and both Lugano and NCC say the planning process continues.

Receivers appointed for Dissington Estate

In a further twist, Dissington Estate tenants have received a letter saying fixed charge receivers had been appointed for Lugano Dissington Estate Ltd and all rent payments were now to be made to the receivers.

The appointment was made by Topland Jupiter Ltd, the company which Lugano Dissington Estate Ltd entered into a credit agreement with in 2016.

In a statement, Lugano Developments Ltd said: “The letters issued to tenants of the Estate relate to a loan arrangement between Lugano and our lenders. The correspondence is as a result of the lender calling in a technical clause on the loan document and discussions are ongoing relating to the longer-term re-financing (of) The Estate.

“It is important to emphasise that this has no material bearing on our ability or determination to pursue our case against the individuals on whom we have served proceedings. Indeed, the only likely impact will be to increase the associated damages claim against the parties concerned.

“Lugano Dissington Estate continues as the entity leading in relation to both the Garden Village project and the legal proceedings.”

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MP slams bank branch closure decision

A decision by Barclays Bank to close its Ponteland branch at the end of January has been slammed by the town's MP.

Guy Opperman said the branch, which is to close on Friday January 25th, was "crucial to Ponteland and the wider community", with more than 150 customers entirely dependent on it.

"Alongside the local county councillors, I have requested an urgent meeting with Barclays in the near future to seek answers, and ask them to reverse this decision," the MP said.

He claimed the closure, which will leave the nearest Barclays branch in Westerhope, will mean a journey of more than 40 minutes by public transport and added that access to banking will become even more difficult for those based in more rural areas.

The latest announcement follows the closure of the Barclays branches in Rothbury and Wooler in early November. Last year, Barclays also closed its bank in Amble, while Alnwick lost its HSBC and Yorkshire Building Society branches, and the Bank of Scotland closed in Wooler.

Recent figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that almost a third of the UK's bank and building society branches open in 2010 are now closed, which equates to nearly 6,000 local branches. Around 60 branches are now closing every month.

Consumer group Which called the trend "alarming" and said many people were left without proper access to services. But banks said their branches were losing customers as more people banked online.

In response to the latest bank closure, Newcastle Building Society has delayed plans to refurbish its Darras Hall branch, which had been due to close for around two months at the start of 2019 as part of an ongoing investment programme across its branch network.



The Society decided to push back its plans to create a new open plan branch with improved meeting spaces for both customers and local community groups until later next year, to minimise disruption to local access to financial services.

Customer director Stuart Miller said: "While we're keen to upgrade what's on offer to customers in Ponteland as soon as possible, we felt that the temporary closure of our branch at the same time that Barclays is choosing to move out of the area would cause too much inconvenience all round, so we'll now be keeping things as they are until later in the year.

"We'll let Ponteland customers know once the rearranged dates for the branch refurbishment have been confirmed, and will look forward to introducing them to our modern, open plan branch design later next year."

Closing soon: the Ponteland branch of Barclays. Photo by the Image Farm.


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Ponteland wins Britain in Bloom gold award

Ponteland was praised for its “wonderful” community spirit as it received a Britain in Bloom gold award in Belfast.

The latest accolade follows seven consecutive Northumbria in Bloom gold awards and a silver gilt in the national Royal Horticultural Society competition last year – all in the ‘small town’ category.

Town Councillor Christine Caisley and the Town Council’s gardening contractor Iain Clough collected the prestigious award from TV presenter Chris Bavin at the RHS ceremony at Belfast Waterfront conference centre.

The Town Council has thanked more than 40 businesses, schools, community groups and dozens of volunteers who 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 to mark 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.

Gardening contractor Iain Clough and Coun Christine Caisley collect the award from Chris Bavin.

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Young and old come together to mark 100th anniversary of end of WWI

By Coun Karen Overbury

Young and old from Ponteland came together in a set of village events on and around Remembrance Day, which this year marked 100 years since the end of the First World War.

Ponteland Town Council organised a range of activities for all ages, including a war poster competition for school children, grants for tea parties in old people's homes, paying for commemorative kneelers in St Mary's

Church, poppy planting throughout the village, Silent Soldiers at the Memorial Hall (one funded by Castle Wardens Lodge) and in the five churches plus Lest We Forget work in schools.

The council's tribute began on November 3rd with a dedication ceremony at the Memorial Hall for a memorial bench donated by the North East War Memorial Project.

A special children's service was held on Friday November 9th attended by pupils from Ponteland Academy, Darras Hall Primary, Richard Coates Primary, Ponteland Primary and Ponteland Private

Nursery. Crosses with the names of the 40 Ponteland men killed in the First World War were planted in St Mary's Garden of Remembrance. After the ceremony, wreaths were laid on the three Commonwealth War Graves in St Mary's Churchyard.

The church was open all weekend for residents to see the impressive Remembrance displays.

The Remembrance Day Parade from the leisure centre to the War Memorial was held on Sunday November 11th, with representatives of the Armed Forces, Guides, Scouts, Boys' Brigade, Police,



Fire and Rescue Service and many other organisations led by Deputy Lord Lieutenant Caroline Pryer and the Mayor, Alan Varley.

A special order of service had been produced with pictures of the winning war posters designed by Ponteland and Darras Hall pupils. Two Ponteland High School pupils, Olivia Weedon-Anderson and Charlie Capps read out the names of the 64 men from Ponteland killed in the two World Wars.

On the evening of November 11th, a Celebration of Peace was held on Coates Green, when hundreds of people

came together. Lanterns and battery-powered tea lights were handed out and the glow from the lights in the dark helped to create a fitting atmosphere for the celebration. A bugler sounded the Last Post at 6.55pm and the beacon, on the top of St Mary's Church, was lit at 7pm. The church bells were then rung and members of St Mary's Church choir led the singing of war songs with the vicar, the Rev Capt Paul Allinson.

The Mayor, Alan Varley, said: "Ponteland Town Council was keen to involve people of all ages in the Remembrance events and we are delighted by the reaction to the various

events and activities.

"The Celebration of Peace on Coates Green was a very fitting finale. Hundreds of residents came together and we are grateful to many people, including St Mary's choir and the bell ringers, the bugler and the Beacon lighters. It was wonderful to see so many people coming together to mark this very special occasion.

"I would also like to thank the many shops and businesses for the poppy displays in their windows and on shop fronts."

Photos by The Image Farm.

Your letters

The Editor
Don't News & Views



Congratulations for a 'wonderful' Remembrance Sunday and thanks to Good Samaritans in this month's letters...

Wonderful Remembrance Sunday

What a wonderful day Remembrance Sunday was in Ponteland.

More than 1,000 people turned out for the parade and the service at the cenotaph at the Memorial Hall, where wreaths were laid and the names of all the fallen were read out by two high school pupils.

Hundreds more turned out on the evening for the lighting of the beacon, songs from the war and a service on the village green. It was a very moving day remembering the fallen, who gave their lives so we are free. The village all came together, young and old.

My thanks go to Councillor Karen Overbury, clerk to the Council Kath Mavin, and the Revd Capt Paul Allinson from St Mary's Church. The amount of work that was put into this celebration was a credit to them all and their teams of volunteers.

The hundreds of hand-made poppies inside St Mary's were unbelievable, and the artwork from the schoolchildren in Ponteland was brilliant.

A day to be proud of and remember.

Mr D Greenwell
Station Lodge, Ponteland

Disappointed at lack of exhibition for WWI memorabilia

Prior to Remembrance Day in 2014 I was approached by the then Mayor Peter Cowey, asking if I possessed any WWI military memorabilia I would be prepared to lend for an exhibition in the Memorial Hall.

As I possessed several items left by my father who had spent over three years in Mesopotamia fighting the Turks, I agreed. I also agreed to lend two WWII uniforms of my own.

The exhibition was highly successful and I understood there was an intention to create something similar for Remembrance Day 2018.

It would appear that the current council

decided against the proposal in spite of the fact the Memorial Hall itself was built and dedicated to those men of Ponteland district who gave their lives in WWI.

As a veteran of WWII I am extremely disappointed that such an exhibition did not take place.

Henry Earp
Crossfell, Darras Hall

Response from Ponteland Town Council:

Ponteland Town Council's exhibition of wartime memorabilia was well-received by residents in 2014, but at no time did the Council agree that another very similar exhibition would be held four years later.

Members of the Council would not, could not, and did not make any such commitment for an event so far in the future. It would have been deemed irresponsible to make such a pledge of money and time.

The sub-committee appointed to plan the 2018 commemoration began discussions at the start of this year. Some current Town Council members who were councillors four years ago were consulted about the practicalities and desire to hold another exhibition. It was decided early on that a fresh approach would be sought.

A theme of involving as many people as possible in the commemoration was agreed, with a particular aim of involving children. We have worked to involve all ages and the final commemoration was the Celebration of Peace on Coates Green on the evening of November 11th, which about 400 people attended.

A special children's service was held on November 9th, which all schools attended, when crosses were planted by the children in memory of the 40 Ponteland men who died in the First World War. The names of the dead from both World Wars were read out by High School students at the War Memorial on November 11th.

The youth of 100 years ago gave their todays for the tomorrows of our children and grandchildren. Educating the children of today will help to ensure that Ponteland does not forget. We will remember them.

Alan Varley
Mayor of Ponteland

Thank you for helping me after fall

I should like to use your columns to express my appreciation to the group of kind people who came to my aid in Ponteland High Street when I fell and became unconscious on October 18th.

These kind folk showed great concern for my welfare, called for an ambulance, and took good care of me until I could be placed in the care of a paramedic from Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Cramlington.

In the flurry of activity following the paramedic's arrival I lost the opportunity to offer my thanks as fully as I would like to have done and not as fully as their generous kindness deserved. I hope those kind folk, reading this, will accept my heartfelt gratitude.

David Headon
Middle Drive, Ponteland

All drivers need to follow the rules

Reading your letters today (Beware "unfair" penalty charges during traffic works – issue 158), I was amazed someone parked his car on a yellow line with his blue badge on display but his parking clock not on display.

Well, stone me, Sherlock the traffic warden was quite right to issue a ticket as he would be unaware how long you had been there.

Read the booklet you got when you received your badge!

James Pierce
Thornhill Road, Ponteland

January issue deadlines: Delivery of the January issue will start on Thursday January 3rd and be completed by Wednesday January 9th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday December 10th. 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 January 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 Manor Xmas Fair

Santa and Mrs Claus will welcome everyone to tombola stalls, cake stalls, fabulous raffle prizes, hook the duck, coffee, mulled wine and Christmas cake and mince pies at Ponteland Manor Residential and Nursing Home, Thornhill Rd, NE20 9PZ, on Saturday December 1st from 2pm to 4pm. Everyone is welcome; we are dog friendly too.

Ponteland Lions Club

On Saturday December 1st we will hold a street collection in Broadway for our charity fund. Our business meeting will be on Wednesday December 12th at 7.30pm in Merton Hall. Visitors welcome. We do not hold a monthly bookstall in December, so our next charity fund bookstall will be at Waitrose on Saturday January 26th. Tel 0845 833 9913 to contact us. We wish everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

Dave Stebbings will give a talk on 'Dragonflies and Damselflies: Jewels of the Air' at 7.30pm on Tuesday December 4th in St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Rd, Ponteland. Admission £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

Threaded crafts

Are you interested in sewing, knitting, crochet or any other threaded craft? Our informal group meets on the first Tuesday of each month (not January or August) in the rear room of Ponteland Memorial Hall from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Next meeting Tuesday December 4th. Cost £2 per week with a joining fee of £10 on your second visit. Contact: emmadenham52@gmail.com

Ponteland Leisure Learning (U3A)

At 2pm on December 5th in St Mary's Parish Centre we have our Faith Tea with entertainment. Non-members always welcome, no charge. Ring (01661) 824953 or visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland.

Merton Hall Christmas coffee morning

Marie Curie Christmas coffee morning with raffle, Christmas gifts and entertainment at Merton Hall on Friday December 7th from 9.30am to 12noon, all welcome. We thank you for supporting the GNAAS - 80 bags donated so far.

Brigades and Church Christmas Fayre

We are holding a joint 'Brigades and Church Christmas Fayre' on Saturday December 8th from 10am at Ponteland Methodist Church. There will be lots of

stalls with cakes, crafts, candles, home-made wine and preserves, plants, tombola, refreshments and a raffle. All proceeds go towards our Youth Brigades and Care n Share supporting local communities.

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 or call (01434) 606 444. See our advert on p22.

Ponteland Rotary Club Christmas Fayre and Carol Concert

Our Christmas Fayre is on Sunday December 9th from 11am until 3pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall, with lots of stalls, eats, music, Santa, kiddies play area. Cost £1 on the door. See our ad on p17. Our Christmas Concert follows at 7.15pm on Thursday December 13th, also at the Memorial Hall with the Salvation Army Band and Choristers. Tickets costing £2 adults and £1 children from Rotarians or at the door.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Wendy Stafford will talk on 'Historic origins of Christmas traditions' on Monday December 10th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday December 10th at 7.30pm we have our AGM at Ponteland Social Club (CIU), Merton Way, NE20 9PX. Charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Contact neegroup@agsgroups.org or visit alpinegardensociety.net/groups/North-East-England or Facebook. com/groups/AGSNEE.

Ponteland WI

Our speaker at 7pm on Tuesday December 11th in the lounge of the Memorial Hall will be Dr Ray Lowry with a talk and slide show on 'Funny Bones and Wisdom Teeth', to be followed by our Christmas Party.

Ponteland Village WI

Members are looking forward to an evening of festive fun at their meeting on Tuesday December 11th at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre (formerly known as the church hall) in Ponteland. Find us on Facebook: Ponteland Village WI.

Kirkley WI

There is no meeting at Kirkley Hall this month. Members will be enjoying a Christmas meal at Ponteland Golf Club. Meetings resume with a Domino Drive

on Wednesday January 9th at 7pm. New members and guests are always very welcome. Visit kirkleywi.wordpress.com

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 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.

Ponteland writers

A friendly group with mixed writing ability and experience. We meet every Wednesday at Post Box coffee shop from 7pm to 9pm. New members welcome.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Ponteland Floral Art Club meets on the third Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland. There will also be a jewellery stall that evening with items suitable for Christmas gifts.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN PONTELAND

The Ponteland Churches wish you a Peaceful and Happy Christmas 2018

The present in the packaging

By Revd. Captain Paul Allinson, Vicar of Ponteland

As we move towards Christmas, we are beginning to see more and more advertisements.

They are often full of wonderful products that delight the eye and promise us delights beyond our wildest dreams. It is often the attractive packaging of products that makes us feel we must have that particular fragrance, food, drink, toy or luxury item.

It can therefore come as something of an anti-climax when we find see the item in reality and it looks rather small and mundane - especially if we have purchased it at great expense.

Christmas itself is well packaged as well, in order to sell the perfect celebration. Everything is luxurious, from Christmas trees to crackers and chocolates to puddings. We are sold the idea through television, radio, magazines and social media and pressured by friends and family to get that must have item which promises the perfect celebration.

It therefore may come as a shock to see afresh the original nativity gift. This gift is indeed small and mundane and yet is indeed that gift which is the true "must have" for a genuinely satisfying Christmas and, indeed, life.



Jesus was not packaged in gold tinsel and sold in a luxurious box and doesn't need any glitzy advertising. But rather came in the form of a small, vulnerable child into a cold and grubby stable in Bethlehem. His only packaging was bands of cloth in a manger.

The gift of love which doesn't need to be sold to us

He is miraculously a priceless gift, given free of charge to all who will receive Him from God our heavenly Father. It is my prayer that this year we will work through the packaging and that we will discover that one true Christmas present. The present that is for life and not just for Christmas. The Christ child who is God's presence in the packaging of Christmas.

May I wish you all a truly Happy Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall

December 16th, 10am Carols of Praise
December 23rd, 10am Sunday Service
December 25th, 10am Christmas Day Service

St Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

December 24th, 3pm Family Nativity with Carols
December 24th, 5pm Family Nativity with Carols
December 24th, 7pm Carol Service
December 24th, 11pm Midnight Mass with Carols
December 25th, 8am Holy Communion
December 25th, 10am Eucharist with Carols

Holy Saviour, Milbourne

December 25th, 11.15am Eucharist with Carols

Methodist Church, Ponteland

December 9th, 10am GB/BB Christmas Parade Service
December 16th, 10am All Age Celebration at the Bridge
December 23rd, 6.30pm Ecumenical Carol Service
December 25th, 10.30am Christmas Celebration

Methodist Church, Milbourne

December 16th, 6.30pm Carol Service
December 24th, 11.15pm Christmas Eve Communion
December 31st, 11.30pm Watch Night Service

St. Matthew's RC Church, Ponteland

December 24th, 4.30pm Carols
December 24th, 5pm Mass
December 25th, 10.30am Christmas Day Mass

December 19th, 8pm

Carols on the Green

December 22nd, 6pm

Informal Carols on the Green under the tree

December 22nd, 10am to 12noon

Carol Singing for Christian Aid outside the park by Waitrose

UNITED SERVICE ON CHRISTMAS EVE AT 7PM IN ST MARY'S PONTELAND
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Latest news from Ponteland Town Council

New long stay disc parking planned for Merton Way

New restrictions on long stay parking are to be introduced in Ponteland to stop the misuse of car parks behind Merton Way. Some drivers had been leaving their cars parked for several days or even weeks, and the new regime will see disc parking introduced. The Town Council is canvassing local businesses to establish who is willing to sell the discs, which will enable parking of up to 24 hours at a time. Anyone caught abusing the new system will be subject to a fine. All parking in the recently extended car park will remain free of charge. The Highways Working Party, which met on October 12th, also discussed the extension of the decorative swan neck light columns and the possibility of providing a bus shelter at Broadway. Both will be considered for the budget for 2019-20.

Thanks to all who contributed to Britain in Bloom award

The Council is delighted to have received a gold award in the small town category for Britain in Bloom 2018. The presentation was made at an awards ceremony held in Belfast on October 19th which the Chairman of the Council's Environment Working Party Councillor Christine Caisley and Iain Clough, the council's gardening contractor, attended. The Council wishes to thank everyone involved in the competition, including Iain and fellow contractors Michael Champion, Jim Scott and Derek and Calum Sherlock; the many sponsors and volunteers; Northumberland

County Council's Neighbourhood Services Team; Town Council staff; and Joyce Butcher, Robin Ramsay and David Goodchild, who had helped so much with the competition entry. The Council was also successful in the Northumbria in Bloom competition, winning a gold award in the same category for the seventh consecutive year.

Northumberland County Council report

Councillor Richard Dodd reported that the County Council was to receive an additional £7.7m to deal with potholes in the county. He is also to look into redundant bus stops on Thornhill Road being used to provide additional parking bays. Councillor Dodd also reported that work was to start on the new school and leisure complex on November 26th, following a consultation held on November 13th on the proposed new fire station on Callerton Lane.

Grant applications

The Council approved a grant of £1,500 for Dalton Village Hall, and of £200 to Richard Coates School's PTA - the final part of the funding required to ensure a book on the history of the school could be published by a local resident.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on November 14th.

Strictly Starters Spring Term

Adult beginners dance classes continuing in January 2019 running from 7.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

on a Monday in Stannington;

Wednesday in Ponteland; & Thursday in Morpeth.



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

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

Places will be strictly limited and we apply a first come first served rule, so if you are interested in coming along, or you would like to register your place, then please contact us now at:



strictlystarters@btinternet.com



[@strictlystarters](https://www.facebook.com/strictlystarters)



Malcolm & Sandra 07768 596380

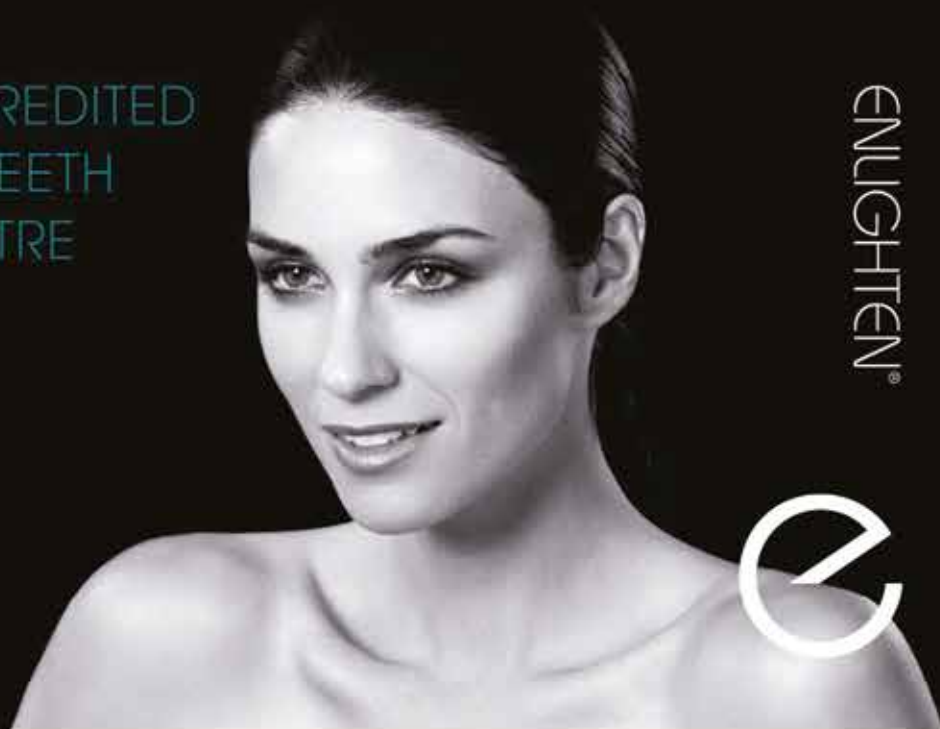


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Be safety and security aware during dark nights



By PC Ingrid Clayton, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

As the dark nights are now upon us this can mean a time of increased crime, therefore please be safety and security aware.

I recommend that when out leave lights on at the front and rear of your house and even a radio to create a feeling that someone is home. Timer switches are an excellent security measure to prevent you forgetting to put the lights on before you leave the house.

If you have a house alarm please use it and, if you do hear an alarm sounding, do not hesitate to report this to police. Ensure doors and windows are locked, do not leave keys in locks and keep house and vehicle keys out of view. If you are going on holiday, do not advertise this on social media.

Scam phone calls

I have had further reports of scam phone calls from offenders stating they are from HMRC and selling shares. These are real examples of how an offender may gain your trust in order to fraudulently take money from you. Do not give out your personal details including your name, address, bank details and do not make any money transactions over the phone or online

if you have not verified the receiver/organisation. If in any doubt contact your bank, someone you know and trust, as well as the police on 101 or, if in an emergency, 999.

Community engagement

I was kindly invited to talk about safety at Richard Coates CE Primary School to a lovely class of Year 1 children as part of their emergency services week. We had an excellent discussion on stranger danger and what is a "safe stranger". The children displayed very good knowledge of how to stay safe as well and then entertained me with their question and answer session. I was asked everything from "why do you enjoy being a police officer?" to "what name do you use on holiday?" The afternoon was finished off with a look at the police car; I can confidently say they thoroughly enjoyed using the lights and sirens multiple times! It was a wonderful to meet the children and I was extremely impressed by them all. Thank you Year 1 at Richard Coates CE Primary School for inviting me.

To report an incident telephone 101 or, in an emergency, 999.

To contact me directly for queries only email me on ingrid.clayton.109@northumbria.pnn.police.uk



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Christmas Market will be “biggest and best ever”

There will be more than 60 stalls for shoppers at the fourth Ponteland Rotary Club Christmas Market being held next weekend.

Potential presents for sale will range from artwork to furniture and Christmas jewellery to woolly hats.

Hot food and beverages will also be on offer along with a dedicated children's entertainment area with lots for little ones to do, including visiting Santa in his grotto.

As an added feature for this year, there is a chance to win a luxury weekend with a fully expensed Jaguar sports car. Just come along to view the car, purchase a ticket and you could be that lucky winner!

The Christmas market is being held from 11am to 3pm on Sunday December 9th in the Memorial Hall. Parking will be restricted there, but is also available at Merton Way and both the High School and Middle Schools have agreed the use of their nearby car parks.

Performers at last year's Christmas Market.



Sunday 9th December

CHRISTMAS MARKET

Ponteland Memorial Hall

60 Stalls, Kids' games, Santa, Live Music

11.00am – 3.00pm



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Old newspaper gives us the headlines from 1991

One of the forerunners to Pont News & Views has been sent to us by a reader who found it clearing an old drawer.

Under the scary headline 'Heads roll in Ponteland', the lead story in Edition 11 of the Pont & Darras Post from autumn 1991 was about the appointment of a new headmaster at Ponteland High School.

Irish ex-Royal Navy and BBC engineer John Foster was replacing former soldier Pip Appleby after his retirement following 19 years at the school.

Other stories featured included a report on a ceremony at County Hall where dignitaries from a number of European countries were entertained by pupils including a choral group from Ponteland Middle and High Schools.

Parliamentary candidates for the Hexham constituency were making early pitches in advance of the 1992 general election.

Younger correspondents had written in calling for a motorbike/mountain bike dirt track and subsidised public transport.

Meanwhile Ponteland's new swimming pool was being billed as 'long awaited leisure luxury'.

There are also several familiar names among the local firms advertising, including Panache, Ponteland Print, Steven & Wade Optometrists, and Bonner & White.

The publication was produced by the Sunderland Echo in conjunction with Ponteland Middle School.



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Young volunteers help enhance wildlife corridor

Thirty young people planted 1,500 bulbs and flowers in the latest stage of the revamp of the old railway line from Rotary Way towards the Airport.

The wild daffodils, snowdrops and wild primroses were planted by Air Cadets, Scouts and Explorer Scouts, alongside a litter pick over four days in late September and October.

The volunteering by the Air Cadets will contribute towards their Participation in Public Events award and the Scouts and Explorer Scouts can use the work for their Duke of Edinburgh Gold and Platinum award.

Funding was raised through the Northumberland County Council Community Chest and from Ponteland councillor Eileen Armstrong's member's small scheme allowance.

The recent planting is part of a two year programme led by Ponteland Community Partnership to reinstate and improve the environment along the old railway track.

The trees planted last year, wild flower seeds and wild bulbs will all help to encourage birds, insects and small mammals to increase in number by providing suitable food and a safe area for breeding.



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Home care firm rated 'outstanding' by inspectors



A family run home care business which helps older people in Ponteland and surrounding areas to continue living in the comfort of their own homes has been praised as 'outstanding' by inspectors.

Home Instead Senior Care, run by Morpeth couple Guy and Carole Kirk, specialises in providing non-medical care for older people including

help around the house, post-operative support, personal care, respite care and trips out.

Clients are matched to caregivers based on shared interests, hobbies and personalities, and care visits are a minimum of one hour to help build trusting relationships.

Following a recent inspection where the views of staff, clients and clients' families are sought as well as those of local health and social care professionals, the firm was rated 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission – the highest rating.

The report said: "Staff demonstrated a real empathy for the people they cared for. They spoke with pride about the importance of ensuring people's needs were held in the forefront of everything that they did."



Ponteland Red Squirrel Group needs your help

Ponteland Red Squirrel Group, which has been helping our reds and encouraging locals to feed, look after and report sightings of squirrels for almost 15 years, is appealing for new volunteers.

The group says it needs more help to report sightings, survey woodlands and monitor feeders, and needs volunteers to help raise awareness via social media, newsletters, coffee mornings and stalls at local fetes and also to help run and build its local volunteer network.

Ponteland Red Squirrel Group recently become part of volunteer-led charity Northeast Red Squirrels, whose aim is to stabilise and then expand the range of red squirrel populations in the region – including Ponteland, Darras Hall and the surrounding area.

If you have a little time to spare contact: pontelandredsquirrels@yahoo.co.uk or 07878 061880.



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Duck Race raises nearly £3,000 for good causes

This year's Ponteland Rotary Duck Race has raised nearly £3,000 for good causes.

One of the main community events on the local calendar, it was helped again by lovely sunny weather for the many hundreds of picnicking families enjoying the fun and entertainment at Ponteland Park.

Rotarian Alan Hall singled out the efforts of children who built and entered their home made boats for praise, ranging from plastic bottles glued together to well-designed and painted sophisticated crafts.

Spectators watch the racing ducks. Photo by Colin Morgan.



Check if your bin collection date is changing

A reminder that 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 introduced over the past few weeks 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 and all affected households should also receive a new collection calendar and information in the post.



Light up a Life

Remember someone special this Christmas and support Tynedale Hospice at Home

To take part in Light up a Life and dedicate a light in memory of someone special, please call 01434 606444 or visit www.tynedalehospice.com/event-light-up-a-life

Please join us for one of our Light up a Life services:

Saturday 1st December 2018, 3pm Hexham Abbey
Tuesday 4th December 2018, 6pm Prudhoe Methodist Church
Saturday 8th December 2018, 3pm St Mary's Church, Ponteland

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Enjoy a selection of Signature starters including specialities from the tandoor like Coastal King Prawns and Seekh Gilafi. Follow that with your choice from our Signature curries which include the ever popular Railway Lamb Curry made with slow braised Northumbrian lamb and our mildly spiced Murgh Methi Palak. Served with Basmati Pilau and a basket of assorted naan breads.

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