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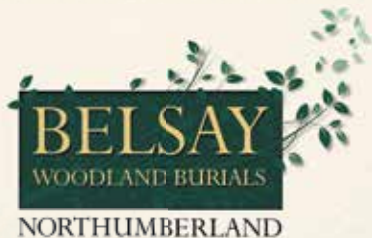


Developer withdraws £10m
High Court challenge

Fairground attraction for
beer festival

New fire station gets green
light

Nursery full of little characters for World Book Day



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Nursery marks World Book Day in style

Peter Rabbit, Alice in Wonderland and Minnie Mouse were among dozens of fictional characters who descended on a Ponteland nursery as it marked World Book Day.

Around 50 children and staff at Ponteland Private Nursery dressed up in a range of colourful costumes, reading their favourite books and engaging in role play revolved around our favourite characters.

The nursery, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, moved to new premises in January, enabling it to double in size. It had been full at its former home at Fairney House, by Ponteland Golf Club, with all 50 spaces taken.

But after a major conversion and refurbishment programme by proprietors Deborah and Mark Jackson, it is now located at the former Abbeyfield nursing home and can accept up to 100 children.



£10m legal battle dropped by garden village developers

A High Court case against Northumberland County Council over plans for a 2,000-home development on the outskirts of Ponteland has been dropped.

Last August Lugano Dissington Estate Limited 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 alleged that delays to the planning process caused by "outrageous and arbitrary conduct amounting

to misfeasance in public office" by all three had led to serious financial loss and damage.

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

The county council had 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.



It now says it will pursue Lugano for "very substantial legal costs".

The dropping of the legal action follows a decision by Lugano to withdraw its planning application for the Garden Village scheme, which had been due to go back to the County Council's Strategic Planning Committee in February.

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

A hybrid planning application was then 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.

But following the election of a new Conservative-led minority administration in 2017 which had the protection of green belt as a key campaign pledge, the long term planning strategy for the county – the Core Strategy – was withdrawn.

The replacement Draft Local Plan removed its proposals to delete more than 400 hectares of green belt land including on Dissington Estate, paving the way for new housing development. NCC said the policy change, which proposed 7,000 fewer new homes across the county over the next two decades, had necessitated redetermination of the planning application.

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.

Last September Dissington Estate tenants 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. Lugano Developments Ltd said the letter related to a loan arrangement between Lugano and its lenders. The Estate now has new owners, LDE Ltd.

See Your letters: p10.



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Dr Alison Guadagno with her 'Incredible' friends at the Kingston Park fundraising event

Mum facing fresh cancer battle takes on London Marathon

A Ponteland mum of three battling a brain tumour is taking on the London Marathon in her latest charity challenge.

Pont News first featured Alison Guadagno last October after she completed the Great North Run with 14 friends, all in fancy dress as Incredibles superhero mum Elastigirl.

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'.

But despite her tumour returning after initial treatment last year, and needing intensive chemotherapy, Alison, 44, is now taking on the London Marathon on Sunday April 28th. She is being accompanied by her sister Caroline Gregory and three friends Joanne Brown, Elspeth Aspinall and Nichola Conlon.

Alison, a doctor at the Great North Children's Hospital, has a charity place from Brain Research UK, Caroline is running for Get Kids going and Nichola is running for Meningitis Now. Between them they need to raise £8,000 to meet the minimum amount required by their respective charities.

But they are already way past that target following a hugely successful fundraising event on Saturday March 9th at the Falcons' ground, Kingston Park, which has so far raised £18,500 with more donations still coming.

The event was hosted by Alison and her Incredibles runners and featured a 'Hit and Miss' music game with a Sonos speaker for the winner, a silent auction and grand auction.

Local businesses made very generous donations of prizes for the auctions and raffle. The auction prizes featured a Ford Ka, donated by We Buy Cars For More, a helicopter flight from Northumbria Helicopters and an original oil painting by Ruth Bond.

The fundraising activities were rounded off with a performance by Dan Hadfield, a Gary Barlow tribute act.

Incredibles group member Andrea Banner said: "Ali's determination to continue with her running and fundraising is remarkable in the face of the devastating news that the tumour has returned and has necessitated a course of intensive chemotherapy."



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Festival's fairground attraction

This year's Ponteland Beer Festival has added six appeal with a fun fair added for the first time.

Back for a sixth year in a row the annual event is a popular community fixture and once again there will be a choice of more than 150 beers, lagers and ciders, a wine, prosecco and gin bar, street food and a vast and varied musical line-up to help you dance the night away.

It all takes place in two giant solid floored and heated marquees at Ponteland Rugby Club from Friday April 26th to Sunday April 28th. The fairground attractions have been added to the fun for the traditional Family Day which takes place on the final day.

Organiser Andy Maidwell said: "Thanks to the fantastic support of local residents and companies who sponsor the festival, the event just seems to get bigger and better every year and once again we would recommend people book tickets early to avoid missing out. Last year we had another record attendance and the Saturday was sold out well in advance.

"We are delighted that the Sunday, which has grown into a day for all



the family will now have fairground attractions to add to the atmosphere. The festival has a great selection of beers, street food and wonderful musical entertainment. We look forward to welcoming everyone, from present and former players to friends, families and everyone connected with the local community."

Once again the festival has a fantastic musical line-up with something for everyone. It all kicks-off on the first night with a double return bill from last year's stunning debutants the Baghdaddies and Live Wire. The former provide an exuberant and rampant brand of world music with ferocious energy and theatrical humour and. Live Wire follow with a unique blend of folk, soul,

motown, rock and roll and all the hits.

On the Saturday afternoon and early evening the music includes a return from country and western artists the Heavenly Thrillbillies and classic covers from the Duke Street Band. They will be joined by Kaino and The Godfathers before Hip Hop Hooray appear on stage as the Saturday evening headline band, making a debut appearance, with their own blend of hip hop.

The family day music on the Sunday is provided by Ponteland's own Community Band and Rock Choir and local band the Pretty Weeds playing everything from Blondie and the Beatles to Fleetwood Mac and T Rex. Added to all this there will be a great range of street food provided by Legend of Toro Travelling Kitchen and Angel Street Food.

Online tickets, which include a commemorative glass and three beer tokens on the Friday and Saturday, are available at £12. The Sunday tickets are £2.50 or free when ordered with Friday or Saturday tickets.

For more information go to: pontelandbeerfestival.co.uk

PONTELAND BEER FESTIVAL 2016

Venue: Ponteland Leisure Centre Rugby Pitch

FRIDAY 26th APRIL
6.00pm - 11.00pm

SATURDAY 27th APRIL
12.00 NOON - 11.00pm

Ticket price includes admission, promotional glass, programme & 3 drink tokens.

SUNDAY 28th APRIL
12.00pm - 4.30pm

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Full details of the festival can be found, together with online sales at www.pontelandbeerfestival.co.uk

Amazing Aaryanna picks up prestigious award

High flying Ponteland student Aaryanna Lever met Education Secretary Damian Hinds MP as she picked up a prestigious award.

Aaryanna was joined by her sister, parents and Ponteland High School headteacher Kieran McGrane at the Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize giving ceremony at University College London.

The Lord Glenamara Prize recognises 10 outstanding young people from the north east every year and it is a special accolade for some very special individuals. The award winners are students who combine academic excellence with significant work in the community and voluntary sectors.

During the visit there was an opportunity to go on a

guided tour of the university campus - perfect for Aaryanna as she has set her sights on attending UCL! She also met the Secretary of State for Education the Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP,

the family of the late Lord Glenamara and UCL'S Vice-Provost amongst other guests.

Mr McGrane said: "Aaryanna is an amazing young woman who has demonstrated all

of the attributes required for recognition for this award. It was a pleasure to be able to share this moment with her and her family who should be rightly proud of her many achievements."



Aaryanna pictured with Education Secretary Damian Hinds MP and Kieran McGrane, headteacher of Ponteland High School



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New fire station gets green light

Plans for a new state-of-the-art fire station and training facility for Ponteland have been given the green light.

The proposal for land to the west of Ponteland High School on Callerton Lane received unanimous approval from Northumberland County Council's Strategic Planning Committee at its March meeting.

The development will create a single-storey, seven-metre-high fire station, a 14-metre-high training tower, a drill yard to the rear of the site, and parking for up to 13 cars.

The existing fire station is being demolished as part of wider plans to free-up land for a new £42m combined primary and high school and leisure facility.

Concerns had been expressed about the loss of mature trees to make way for the new fire station. John Hague, of Ponteland Civic Society, had addressed the meeting to express concerns about the green belt and the impact on what is a designated 'green approach' to the town.

He said: "It would inflict serious damage on the existing landscape scene. It has to be located elsewhere, it has to be put in another location."

But Coun Christine Caisley, of Ponteland Town Council, accepted there were very special circumstances as there is nowhere else in the town to locate the fire station.

And after the meeting, Ponteland North county councillor Richard Dodd welcomed the decision, saying: "It's much needed and imagine the howls that would happen if we weren't replacing it."

He added that any trees lost would be replaced in a town which is 'one of the leafiest places in the north of England'.



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Pont News & Views



The war of words continues as a developer drops its legal action against the county council over the Garden Village plans...

Apology needed after "humiliating defeat" for developer

The summary dropping of all legal action must amount to the most humiliating admission of defeat by Lugano.

All along there was no foundation for their wild and unsubstantiated allegations against councillors, council staff and the county council itself, all of whom have just been carrying out their proper functions.

The particularly vitriolic and personal statements from the Lugano directors Richard Robson and Allan Rankin have been shown to be indefensible and without foundation. They should publicly apologise without delay.

Despite all of the bullying tactics and threats and all of the money thrown at this huge development by a foreign registered company, Lugano Dissington have finally come to the conclusion that their planning case is so weak that it has little chance of progressing and further that there was little chance of success with their flimsy and unfounded legal action against us.

This Dissington scheme was always a brazen attempt to build on hundreds of acres of valued green belt, changing our countryside for ever. It never did meet all of the criteria to qualify as a Garden Village proposal. Their crude attempts to bully both council members and officers who have been doing their proper jobs, has failed dramatically.

Lugano's claims through the Council's standards procedure have been found to be lacking in substance and evidence and have been ruled out. And now they have withdrawn any attempt at court action as they finally accepted that there was every prospect that it would have been struck out at the first hearing.

This has been a long saga which has concerned many in the local community. They will be delighted that the planning system in Northumberland has been shown to be both robust and fair, not bending to the demands of the large developers, treating all applications

according to clear criteria without fear or favour. The green belt has been preserved in the face of rapacious and unjustified development.

Not only will my lawyers be pursuing Lugano Dissington Ltd for the very substantial legal costs which have been incurred in defending against their ridiculous claims, but the very least all involved deserve is a clear and unreserved apology for all of the personal upset they have caused not just to ourselves but to the wider community of Ponteland.

Coun Peter Jackson
Leader, Northumberland County Council.

We stand fully behind our claims: developer

We cannot comment on recent events as these are the decisions of the new owners of the estate and associated company (LDE Ltd) which was taken out of our control as a result of the costs incurred in dealing with this case.

Notwithstanding this, despite Coun Jackson's continued malicious and ill-informed protestations, we stand fully behind the claims made in both the legal proceedings and our previous complaints to the council concerning the named individuals.

It is very telling that as yet neither of these have been suitably or independently investigated, yet significant public monies have been expended to protect their unlawful conduct and frustrate due legal process.

This council has a long record of removing individuals who refuse to comply with the wishes of the Leader and his supporters at very significant cost to the public purse. This pattern continues as various individuals seek recourse through the courts and employment tribunals for how badly they, like us, have been treated.

For a public authority to use funds in this way to frustrate legitimate business partnerships and undermine the reputation of those who have both worked with,

and for, the Council is concerning in the extreme.

We will continue to invest in development projects throughout the North East and beyond and to show our commitment to creating projects of real value economically and which contribute to the wider regeneration of the region.

Allan Rankin said: "Peter Jackson continues to make erroneous statements that are little more than his vitriolic personal opinions and I stand fully behind all the claims made against him. Of course it is open for him to sue me but I doubt very much that he will, as he knows fine well I can prove it."

Lugano Property Group
*Lugano Buildings, Melbourne St,
Newcastle, NE1 2JQ*

The residents of Medburn are being laughed at

As Medburn chaos continues, I can't help but be cynical about the planner speak we are being fed.

According to para 3.7 of the 'Vision' expressed in the Northumberland Local Plan 'In smaller settlements a level of housing development that is proportionate to the size of the settlement and appropriate to its character will have been delivered, meeting local needs wherever possible'.

So, Medburn, a hamlet of approx. 60 houses, has had developments amounting to 162 houses approved since 2016. Hardly 'proportionate'.

On p45 we see that 'the health and wellbeing of.....communities will be safeguarded by ...ensuring access to decent affordable homes, services and facilities'. But Medburn has no pavements, no facilities and a bus service which runs every 3 hours! Medburn Manor (Bellway) and Medburn Park (Medburn Homes) do not offer affordable housing.

The residents of Medburn are being laughed at.

Margaret Chaytor
The Avenue, Medburn

May issue deadlines: Delivery of the May issue will start on Monday April 29th and be completed by Friday May 3rd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday April 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 May 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...

Alpine Garden Society and Scottish Rock Garden Club

On Saturday March 30th our Spring Show will be held at Hexham Mart, Tyne Green, Hexham, NE46 3SG. There will be a wide variety of plants on show, from alpiners to woodland plants and bulbs and dwarf shrubs in flower, as well as rare plant nurseries from around the country. The show opens at 11am until 3.30pm. Plant sales from 11am. Admission is £3 payable on the door. Children and Members free.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

On Tuesday April 2nd Kelly Hollings is giving a talk about 'Ratty Returns', re-introducing water voles to Kielder. Admission £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

Ponteland Leisure Learning (U3A)

At our meeting at 2pm on Wednesday April 3rd in St Mary's Parish Centre, Brian Ripley will talk on 'Bees Lives and their Contribution to ours.' On May 1st Margaret Dodds will talk on 'Tyneside Cinema Past and Present'. Visitors are always welcome – no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland or call (01661) 822225.

Kirkley WI

Our guest speaker at 7pm on Wednesday April 3rd at Kirkley Hall will be Laura Tingey whose topic is 'Waste and Recycling'. Guests always welcome. Visit: kirkleywi.wordpress.com

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

David Butler will speak on 'Plant Hunters' on Monday April 8th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall. Visit: pontelandsgc.co.uk

Ponteland WI

Our speaker at 7pm on Tuesday April 9th in the lounge of the Memorial Hall will be Barry Mead who will give a talk and slide show on Whitley Bay in old Postcards, a place with happy memories for all of us as children, teenagers and parents. Our annual coffee morning will be held on Saturday April 13th from 10am to 12noon.

Ponteland Village WI

Our meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday April 9th in St Mary's Parish Centre

will include a talk on funerals. Our subgroups include dining out, a book and film group, walking group plus theatre and film group. Find us on Facebook: Ponteland Village WI.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

Audrey Foster will be our demonstrator at the next meeting at 2pm on Wednesday April 10th in the lounge at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Her theme will be 'Fact, Folklore and Fiction'. Visitors always welcome (£7).

Ponteland Lions Club

We meet in Merton Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday April 10th for our monthly business meeting with a social meeting later in the month. Our charity fund bookstall will be at Waitrose from 9am to 4pm on Saturday April 27th. Contact us on 0845 833 9913 or visit our website.

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday April 15th from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, we have Jessica Grady 'Journey into the Unconventional'. All welcome, £4. Contact: Secretary Penny Ford at penelopeford636@btinternet.com or (01670) 788278.

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 is at 7pm on Wednesday April 17th (enter via back door). Visit: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Ponteland Local History Society

Duncan Hutt will speak on 'Wind and Water Mills in North East England' at 7.30pm on Thursday April 18th at St Mary's Parish Centre. Visitors welcome: £2. Find us on Facebook.

Ponteland Civic Society

At 7.30pm on Monday April 29th at Ponteland CIU Club, Merton Way, we have a lecture by Richard Pears entitled 'Safe Sanctuaries: Defensible Churches of Northern England'. Visitors are most welcome, for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

Ponteland NCT Reunion

Did you belong to Ponteland National Childbirth Trust (NCT) between 1988 and 1993? Would you like to meet up with old NCT friends over a drink? Then come along to The Badger Pub on Thursday May 2nd at 7.30pm where we'll be gathering in the Function Room. For more information contact Chris on (01661) 824196.

Ponteland Bowling Club

Ponteland Bowling Club, Darras Road, next to the Memorial Hall, will be holding free 'Taster' sessions at 10.30am on the following dates: Saturday May 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th as well as 2pm on Saturday May 18th. Come and give bowls a try, all equipment provided. The morning session on May 18th will run alongside a Coffee Morning to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association. Visit: pontelandbowls.com

Royal Northern Sinfonia: Gran Partita

A concert at St Mary the Virgin, Ponteland, on Saturday May 11th at 7.30pm. A showcase for RNS' complete wind section plus guests, directed by Steven Hudson (oboe), focusing on Mozart's much-loved Gran Partita, famously featured in the Oscar-winning blockbuster Amadeus. Programme also includes pieces by Debussy, Strauss, and more. Standard tickets £15, Under 18s £5 available at sagegateshead.com/event/rns-spring-chamber-tour or via the ticket office on (0191) 443 4661.

Ponteland Ukulele Band

We are a friendly group of mixed ability ukulele players. We meet Tuesdays at the CIU club from 1pm to 3pm. New members welcome.

RAF Air Cadets

733 Sqn Air Training Corps is open to boys and girls between the ages of 12 to 17 years. The Squadron's activities include flying, gliding, shooting, first aid, cadet camps home and abroad and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The Squadron meets Mondays and Fridays, 7pm to 9.30pm at the Squadron HQ, Army Reserve Centre, Kingston Park. For further information contact Flt Lt G Smith RAFAC, Officer Commanding at 733@aircadets.org or (0191) 2862691 Monday and Friday evenings

The Cross of Jesus: The Logo of Love

By Revd. Captain Paul Allinson, Vicar of Ponteland

In our modern world we are often able to identify companies and organisations from their corporate logo.

These can help us to recognise something about them and the ethos that they wish to communicate. In correspondence I receive I'm struck by the huge variety of ecclesiastical logos.

A Newcastle Parish has multi-coloured hands joined in friendship which tells a powerful story. Our own Parish Crest celebrates our long association with Merton College, Oxford (we have just concluded our 750 Year Anniversary Celebrations).

Central to this however, both in our own 'brand-logo' and more widely is the Cross - the ultimate and universal logo of Christianity. The image of a form of horrendous torture may seem both shocking and inappropriate. But that is the point!

In the blood, pain and passion. In the crown of thorns and nails. In the tears and terror. God reveals his Love most fully. Without Calvary there can be no Easter. So we must avoid the tendency to sanitise and sentimentalise the events of Holy Week. For in it God gives himself in all the brokenness of humanity in order to conquer sin and death forever.

The Cross is still today a symbol that challenges and unnerves. Although in many contexts it is removed from the public arena it remains timeless, powerful and true – reminding us of the Easter Message that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life'. (John 3:16 NRSV)

In this we can all rejoice in the Easter Hope. Alleluia Christ Is Risen. He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia.



Churches together in Ponteland

*The Ponteland churches wish you
a peaceful and joyous Easter*

United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall

Palm Sunday Service April 14th	10am
Good Friday Service April 19th	10am
Easter Sunday Communion April 21st	10am

St. Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

Palm Sunday April 14th	
Holy Communion	8am
Parish Eucharist	10am
Informal Worship	6.30pm
Holy Monday to Holy Wednesday April 15th to 17th	
Worship and Reflection	7pm
Holy Wednesday April 17th - Holy Communion	10am
Maundy Thursday April 18th	
Choral Eucharist	
Followed by stripping of the Altar and Vigil	7pm
Good Friday April 19th	
Proclamation of the Cross	10.30am
Holy Saturday April 20th	
Easter Liturgy He is Risen	7pm
Easter Sunday April 21st	
Holy Communion	8am
Parish Eucharist	10am
Easter Songs of Praise	6.30pm

Methodist Church, Ponteland

Palm Sunday April 14th All Age Parade Service	10am
Wednesday April 17th Family Easter Journey	4pm – 8pm
Maundy Thursday April 18th	
Upper Room Service With Holy Communion	7pm
Good Friday Worship April 19th	10am
Easter Day April 21st	
All Age Celebration With Holy Communion	10am

Methodist Church, Milbourne

Good Friday Service April 19th	7pm
Easter Sunday April 21st Communion Service	6.30pm

St Matthew's R.C., Ponteland

Good Friday Passion April 19th	3pm
Easter Sunday April 21st Mass	10am

Holy Saviour, Milbourne

Palm Sunday April 14th Morning Prayer	11.15am
Easter Sunday April 21st Holy Communion	11.15am

Coates Green, Ponteland

Good Friday April 19th	11.15am
Raising of the Cross	
Refreshments in the Methodist Hall after the service.	

.....
You are warmly invited to these services.
.....

New weekly walking group launched in Ponteland

A new weekly walking group is being launched in May to help the people of Ponteland get fitter, healthier and happier.

The new group is part of Walking for Health, a national network of more than 350 local walking groups.

Its launch follows an appeal by local resident Gordon Allan earlier this year to establish a team of trained volunteers to run the Walking for Health walks in Ponteland.

Starting on the May 7th, the walks will take place every Tuesday, meeting at 10.30am at Ponteland Leisure Centre.

The walks are open to everyone and are designed to last between an hour and an hour-and-a-half. People who want gentle exercise, enjoy being outdoors and want to explore the local network of excellent footpaths and bridleways are all invited.

The walks are also a great way to meet new people or socialise with friends. The routes are all on good footpaths and require no specialist equipment other than a pair of stout walking shoes/

trainers and a jacket to keep you warm and dry.

They have been designed for men and women who want to be more active or to provide a step down for people whose level of fitness has declined due to injury, illness or age.

Walking alone, particularly on quiet footpaths, can be a barrier for many people and the walks overcome that by providing an opportunity for people to

walk together and to meet new friends. The walk volunteers will make sure everyone is safe and nobody gets left behind. Assistance dogs only.

For more information, to volunteer, or just to chat to someone about the walks contact West Northumberland Health Walks Co-ordinator Lorraine Oliver on (01670) 622368 or at loliver@activenorthumberland.org.uk or local walks leader Gordon Allan on 07936 135469.



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Latest news from Ponteland Town Council

New technology to prioritise roads which flood for gully cleansing

New technology is to be used to prioritise roads in Ponteland susceptible to blockages and subsequent flooding for gully cleansing. The county's Highways Manager told the Town Council's Highways Working Party that a new digital audit processing system was being introduced which will provide information regarding recommended cycles for areas in order of priority. The Mayor also reported on a recent useful meeting he had had with the Highways Manager to discuss various problem areas in and around the centre of Ponteland.

New lighting planned for Thornhill Road toilet block

Lighting is to be installed on the toilet block on Thornhill Road on a timer to improve lighting levels in the car park, subject to consultation with the county's planning department. The decision followed a recommendation from the Environment Working Party which had met on February 18th and is subject to consultation as the toilets are in the conservation area.

Temporary Callerton Lane play area due to open for Easter

Work is to start shortly on the temporary play area that is being provided whilst the work on the school and leisure complex is carried out. It is to be located adjacent to the entrance to the school overflow car park and will contain six items of equipment. It is hoped that the area will be completed by Easter.

Grant applications

Grants of £600 to the Darras Hall Estate Committee to assist with their work on the upkeep and maintenance of the bridle path and £700 to the North East War Memorials Project to assist with their fundraising to replace outdated technology were approved. The NEWM Project has carried out a lot of work relating to the research and cataloguing of the war memorials in Ponteland. Councillors deferred consideration of a donation to Northumberland Pride to the April meeting and asked the Clerk to find out where other events were being held and other sources of funding. Remaining funds in the small grants budget would be carried forward to 2019-20.

£345m funding deal announced

A £345m funding deal which will increase job opportunities, lead to additional tourism, improve digital connectivity and unlock investment in towns has been announced by the UK and Scottish Governments. The Borderlands Partnership is a collaboration between the five cross-border local authorities - Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council. Ponteland county councillor Veronica Jones also reported on a 'Daily Mile' initiative being introduced in local schools. This will see pupils walking a mile each day to improve their health and wellbeing, with 37 schools in the county agreeing to take part.

This report is based on the minutes of the town Council meeting held on March 13th.



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Christmas market raises £3,500 for cancer charity

A North-East cancer charity has received a cheque for £3,500 from the proceeds of Ponteland's Christmas market.

Members of the Rotary Club of Ponteland visited the Gosforth headquarters of Daft as a Brush, which provides free transport to patients receiving cancer treatment, to present the cheque.

This was the fourth Christmas Market organised by the satellite group, assisted by members of the main club, and was the most successful yet. There were around 60 indoor stalls selling a wide range of gift ideas in a packed Memorial Hall, and further traders outside, supported by a range of live music and song.



The event raised a magnificent £4,700 for Daft as a Brush and other charities. This year, the club is delighted to announce that Daft as a Brush will once again be the event's headline charity, with the market again being held at the Memorial Hall, on Sunday November 24th.

The Rotary Club of Ponteland meets every Tuesday, whilst the satellite group, designed for those who wish to be part of Rotary but cannot commit to daytime meetings, meets monthly. New members are always welcome - contact Alan Hall on 07977 617693 or Chris Goodfellow on 07961 852515.

New monthly drop-in offers free health checks

Monthly healthy checks are being launched at Ponteland Primary Care Centre in a new initiative designed to encourage and support healthy living.

Ponteland Community Partnership is starting the 'monthly drop-in' at the GP practice on Meadowfield Industrial Estate in April. It will be held from 2pm to 3.45pm on the second Friday of each month.

This facility will be manned by a medical professional available to check blood pressure and weight. No appointment is required, but it is stressed this is not a substitute for a GP appointment.

The monthly drop-in will encourage and support healthy living in a one to one environment and signpost individuals to local services for the patients' benefit.

The service, funded by the Community Foundation's 'Out and About' fund, fits outside the NHS but will be hosted by the White Medical Group for all residents over the age of 18 and those who work in Ponteland.

On arrival, attendees will be greeted at the entrance of the Medical Centre by representatives of the Community Partnership and taken to the waiting area.

A simple record card will be supplied to bring back on any further visits but you will not be required to give any personal details; this is purely anonymous.



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Croquet Club recruiting new members

Belsay Hall Croquet Club is recruiting for new members for its playing season starting in May.

The club, located in a beautiful setting within the walled garden at the hall, is inviting both beginners and experienced players of all ages to join.

The basic skills required are just the ability to hit a ball with a mallet on a reasonably flat grass surface. As skills develop it becomes a game of skill, tactics and strategy and as such not only offers physical exercise but mental stimulation as well.

Some members play socially only and others enjoy entering internal and external competitions – so it's a great way to make friends and meet

new people.

The playing season is typically the beginning of May until the end of September. Members pay a small annual fee to the club and must also become members of English Heritage who manage the site.

There are also various club and associated activities during the winter months providing an opportunity to meet with other players and friends.

To get started you will only need to have a pair of flat soled shoes. All other equipment needed to play the game is provided completely free of charge by the club. If you decide to become a member, you will need white clothing.

You will be invited to an initial trial session and afterwards you will be able to attend a couple of club sessions for free until you decide whether croquet is for you.

Anyone wishing to give the game a try or develop their existing croquet skills should contact belsaycroquet@gmail.com or call Colin on (01661) 825980 or David on (0191) 236 5374.



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Nominations sought for Community Partnership

The 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Ponteland Community Partnership will be held on Wednesday May 15th at 7pm in Ponteland Memorial Hall Committee Room (enter via back door).

Nominations for membership of the Executive Council for the posts of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer are being sought as well as members of the Executive Committee and should be submitted in writing no later than Friday April 26th.

Applications to be made via the website contact page at pontelandcommunitypartnership.com

We are a group of volunteers all with a strong community spirit who wish to reach out to all residents, working with other local groups, and engage with projects and events for young and old to enhance their quality of life.



TO STOP FRAUD™

Residents warned of another Council Tax scam

Ponteland residents are being warned to be on their guard following another spate of Council Tax telephone scams.

The Trading Standards team at Northumberland County Council has received a number of complaints about telephone calls and text messages where the caller claims that the resident can have their Council Tax band reassessed upon payment of £150.

They claim to be acting on behalf of Northumberland County Council but in reality they are not.

If residents wish to have their Council Tax band assessed, they can do so, free of charge, by contacting The Valuation Office Agency via gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency or using details on a previous or current Council Tax bill.

For further advice contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0345 404 0506, or report any potential fraud to Action Fraud at actionfraud.org.uk/report_fraud, or by calling 0300 123 2040. Useful advice for consumers and businesses is available on the Take Five - To Stop Fraud website at takefive-stopfraud.org.uk

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