

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Ex-cop hired to target
environmental offenders

BBC stars pay tribute to
Darras radio legend

School to halve in size
after primary move

Sun shines on park party

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Flytipping at the River Pont by Dissington Bridge near Medburn last autumn



New environmental enforcement officer Dave Foy

Flytippers, litterbugs, vandals and irresponsible dog owners are all being targeted by a new environmental enforcement officer patrolling Ponteland.

Former police officer Dave Foy has been hired by Ponteland Town Council to crack down on offenders spoiling our local environment. Employed by Northumberland County Council, he is seconded to Ponteland two days per week.

And while he no longer has the power of arrest, he can dish out Fixed Penalty Notices of up to £400 and prosecute repeat offenders. However, Dave would prefer to educate and increase social awareness and responsibility to reduce environmental offending.

He said: "I am here to serve the local community, to help preserve and improve the health and wellbeing of all residents with whom I am looking

forward to meeting and working. Together we can reduce the occurrences of the issues that can detrimentally affect the quality of life for people in the town."

Dog fouling is one of the most commonly reported issues.

Dave said: "I will be patrolling, primarily to engage and meet with dog walkers and will promote the County Council's Green Dog Walking Scheme. Locations frequented by children will be a priority.

"Dog fouling is so unnecessary these days when poo bags are widely available as are bins to put the bags in. I am a dog owner myself and I know there is no excuse for not dealing with dog waste properly.

"It is a miserable task for families to deal with the consequences of it and people need to remember that dog fouling carries a health risk. Because of this enforcement will be taken – either a £100 Fixed Penalty Notice or further prosecution for repeat offenders. Make no mistake – if I witness an offence, action will be taken."

Littering will be another priority. Dave warned: "My role is to ensure the quality of life in Ponteland is maintained. Those who chose to disrespect the local community by discarding their litter thoughtlessly will be taken to task.

"People should be aware that the offence of dropping or throwing litter includes cigarette butts and chewing gum as well as items thrown out of a car. If I witness an instance of littering, I can issue an £80 FPN."

In 2018 there were 3,390 reported flytips in Northumberland – all of which had to be investigated. Whilst this is not prevalent in Ponteland, members of the public are being urged to report any flytipping and, if safe to do so, to take note of the vehicle and registration.

Dave's remit also includes graffiti and he has a wider power to address anti-social behaviour by issuing community protection warnings and notices regarding issues that have a negative impact on the local environment and residents.

To report any environmental offences visit: northumberland.gov.uk/SelfService/Report.aspx or call 0345 600 6400.



Don't make it easy for thieves and burglars



By PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

Acquisitive and opportunistic crime continues to be a theme across the area.

Thieves will target properties, vehicles and items left lying around eg (bikes, garden equipment). Please keep valuables secured when not in use. Ensure vehicles are locked and windows are not left open. Homes and outbuildings should also be kept secure to prevent opportunistic or sneak in burglaries.

Please be vigilant and report suspicious persons, vehicles or activity.

If you are going on holiday consider the following:

- Be careful of where you publish your absence on the internet. Status updates, comments and photos on social media can all give away the fact that you are out of your home for an extended period.
- If you use a taxi to get to the airport, use a company you trust and don't discuss your holiday plans.
- If you have a trusted neighbour, friend or relative nearby with a key, ask them to draw your curtains in the evening and back in the morning. Don't leave curtains drawn during the day as this shows the house is empty.
- Ask a neighbour to push post through your letterbox and take in any deliveries for you.

As we move into the summer months, there is a noticeable and welcome increase in activity with both locals and visitors alike making the most of the weather and light nights. Leisure pursuits such as cycling, horse riding, dog walking, camping attract a large following and can also present a number of complaints to police as a result of inconsiderate behaviour.

Motorists

Care should be taken on rural roads with high undergrowth and hedges and visibility can be reduced. Motorists need to be alert to the presence of cyclists, agricultural vehicles and horses. Should a horse be encountered, please pass wide and slow. Do not sound your horn or cause the horse to be startled.

Dog walkers

Please stick to designated rights of way or permissive routes. Ensure your dog is under control (on a lead) particularly when near livestock.

Camping

Check whether you have permission to set up camp in an area – seek the landowner's permission. Always ensure that litter is not left and any site is cleared of debris when leaving.

Community Speedwatch

Local Community Speedwatch Volunteers have continued to deploy in recent weeks. In the last month 43 vehicles were recorded speeding, resulting in 36 warning letters being sent

to registered keepers of vehicles. The information collected through the Speedwatch scheme can be shared with partners, County Council and Parish Councils. The data provided is invaluable and supports the decision making process for any future speed reduction measures, whether this is improved signage, change to road layouts or consideration of detection cameras.

Special Constable Jon Gray

Undoubtedly a familiar face to many local residents, there has been recent social media coverage via Northumbria Police feeds in which there was an acknowledgement of Jon's continued voluntary contribution to both the organisation and the local community. A few people have misinterpreted this recognition and publicity, mistaken in the belief he had retired from his role. Jon wishes it clarified that he is not (yet) standing down from his role. He may consider a 'phased withdrawal' from patrol duties as a result of the inevitable ageing process, but still remains a valuable member of the local Neighbourhood Team. Keep up the good work Jon!

Contact a member of East Tynedale Neighbourhood Team:
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A nice guy who made a difference

By Chris Jennings

He made a difference, and he was a nice guy. That was how radio legend John Myers said he wanted to be remembered.

And judging by the fulsome tributes from some of the biggest names in broadcasting, John got his wish. Sadly it came a lot sooner than we all would have wanted.

John was in Edinburgh with his beloved wife of 35 years Linda, as part of a 60th birthday gift from his family, on June 1st when he collapsed at the end of a round of golf at Gleneagles of a suspected heart attack and could not be revived.

Having last year successfully recovered from extended treatment for throat cancer, his sudden death came as a huge shock.

Two days later BBC Radio 2 presenter Jeremy Vine set aside part of his weekday lunchtime talk show to pay a lengthy tribute to John. Describing him as "one of the friendliest, funniest people in the radio industry", he said: "He was a close and loyal friend to me and many of my colleagues.

"He had a hugely successful career as a broadcaster and radio entrepreneur. This news is completely unexpected... It is impossible to describe John in a way that captures even five per cent of his greatness. RIP John Myers, family man, radio man. Taken far too soon. Best controller Radio 2 never had."

Describing the news as "very sad", Tony Blackburn said: "I worked with (John) at various radio stations and liked him very much."

Jonathan Wall, the controller of BBC Radio 5 live, added: "Stunned to hear that one of the godfathers of UK radio, John Myers, has died. Can't believe it. He was so supportive to me personally in my job at BBC5 Live always giving constructive advice. So much still to give. RIP big John. British radio has lost one of the special ones."

John hailed from Carlisle where, in 1980 aged 21, he got his first break with BBC Radio Cumbria. Having been a DJ in city pubs and clubs, he wanted to play the hits but found himself presenting Lamb Bank, a service putting farmers with surplus lambs in touch with those looking for additional lambs.



John in his early career on Border TV.

He later freelanced at commercial stations before becoming Border TV's most popular continuity announcer, remembered for presenting the Border Birthdays slot with a puppet called Eric the Monkey and introducing programmes in costume.

During his time at Lancashire-based Red Rose he became something of a local celebrity, even appearing in panto in Blackburn. When Border TV moved into radio John returned to Carlisle to launch its Century brand, running stations in Manchester, Nottingham and Newcastle.

Better known as his alter ego John Morgan to his hordes of listeners on Century Radio, he combined the roles of presenter and station boss.

In the late 90s he joined Guardian Media Group to establish its radio division. As chief executive he developed the Real Radio, Smooth Radio and Rock Radio brands, buying stations worth more than £100m.

Moving into semi-retirement aged 50, later advisory roles included a commission by the Government to write a report into the future of commercial radio. Many of his recommendations were included in the Digital Economy Act 2010.

The BBC then asked him to advise on its national and local radio stations. John was made an honorary fellow of the University of Cumbria in 2012. He was a visiting professor there and at Sunderland University, giving his time and sharing his enthusiasm with students.

John also chaired numerous radio industry awards and latterly hosted ceremonies including the Carlisle Living Awards, The Cumberland News



Community Heroes Awards and the annual News & Star pensioners' Christmas concert at the Sands Centre.

A Darras Hall resident, John launched a new monthly community podcast for Darras Hall and Ponteland in 2017 featuring 'the people and places of the North's garden village'. Earlier this year he set up a new Facebook group for people living and working in Darras Hall.

He was also a big supporter of Pont News, and had recently emailed me to say: "Hope you are well. Fancy a coffee soon and a catch up. Let me know when you are around, it would be good to see you. I'm back on top form!"

Sadly I never got to have that coffee and see that beaming smile once more.

At his funeral at Carlisle Cathedral on June 15th, John's son Scott told a tearful congregation: "Our hearts are broken, but also bursting with love...Dad will live on through photos and videos, stories and memories. And snippets of advice we can trust and take forward."

The service ended with John's warm, familiar voice through the cathedral's speakers: "I think at the end, when someone's looking down and someone says 'John Myers – what did you think?' I think if people said 'He made a difference, and he was a nice guy', I think that's the best anyone can hope for."

John leaves wife Linda, children Kerry and Scott and grandchildren Marcus and Mia.



Alex Reed from South West Denton gets a soaking from Emily Bewick, three, as daughter Sophia Reed, also three, wets her sponge

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Families enjoy fun in the sun at Party in the Park

More than 2,000 people gathered to enjoy a sunny afternoon of entertainment at Ponteland Park.

The crowds were entertained by Ponteland Community Band, the Jill Errington Dancing Group, Ponteland Ukulele Band, Darras Hall Primary School Ensemble, and Ponteland Rock Choir at this year's Party in the Park.

Other attractions included a fun fair, pony rides, Punch & Judy, a climbing wall, archery and a bouncy castle, alongside food and refreshments and various stalls promoting local organisations, charities and small businesses.

The annual event is organised by the Christian Churches together in Ponteland - St Mary's, St Mathew's Catholic Church, Ponteland Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church to create a social gathering for the families and children of Ponteland and to support local charities.

Barry Shaw, from the organising committee, described the event as a "big success" with around 250 more people than last year and well in excess of 2,000 attending.

Photos by Barry Pells.

Cover shot: Jack, aged three, enjoys a pony ride



Darras Hall Primary School Ensemble



Ponteland Ukulele Band



Tom Maughan, aged two



Dancer from Jill Errington Dance School



Polly Hermon, eight, of Choppington tackles the climbing wall



Ella Hermon, six, and Polly Hermon, eight, of Choppington



Sophie Waite, nine, with Clive Franklin of Northumbria Blood Bikes

School to halve in size after change to primary

A Ponteland school is to more than halve in size next year after converting from a middle to primary school.

Ponteland Community Middle School, which currently has around 550 pupils in Years, 5, 6, 7 and 8 aged nine to 13, will have just 240 – 30 for each intake from nursery to Year 6 after conversion to a primary school in September 2020.

Last December, leaders at PCMS launched a consultation on converting to primary provision after the Department for Education rejected plans to extend its roll by three years to 16.

Two-thirds of parents supported the proposal to convert to a two to 11 primary school during a six week consultation, a move confirmed by the deputy Regional Schools Commissioner in March.

This will bring PCMS, ranked 25th in the Sunday Times Schools Guide 2019 top 500 English state primary schools list, in line with the two tier system which launches in Pele Trust schools this September - Ponteland High and

Ponteland, Darras Hall, Belsay, Heddton St Andrews and Richard Coates primary schools.

PCMS leaders and many parents had fought off plans to close it under an education reorganisation approved by Northumberland County Council in 2016, which ditched the previous three tier system of first, middle and high schools in favour of the two tier primary/secondary model.

It avoided closure by securing academy status, independent of local authority control. But even with the move to primary, the problem remains that there will be no guaranteed places at Year 7 at Ponteland High School which will prioritise pupils from primary schools in the new Pele Trust.

PCMS headteacher Caroline Pryer said: "We are delighted to have secured the future of the school. We have built a strong reputation and legacy for PCMS over the decades. Yes, we shall be a smaller school but how exciting to start from the very beginning with the youngest children and ensure they have the very best start in education at our school."

"Yes, we shall have fewer of our exemplary staff but where our legacy was in this building, we know our legacy is being shared with equally brilliant schools across the region as our exceptional, lovely teachers and staff find their next forever school."

"We are very much hoping that with only 30 children in each year group that there will be success for some children gaining a pathway to Ponteland High School. Sadly (we are) not an official feeder to PHS or any other secondary school and will explore options in the meantime. Some parents have indicated they would like us to help their child do well enough to be able to get in to the Newcastle private schools."

"We have had lots of positive responses from parents delighted that their primary child accesses middle school facilities; science labs, a music room, IT suite, food/art and DT specialist rooms, 3G pitch tennis courts and a sports hall. The community is delighted to have our facilities for evening activities, community groups and sporting projects."



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Students see new school take shape

Excited students from Ponteland High saw how their new school building is starting to take shape during a visit to the construction site.

Building works on the £42m scheme – one of the largest school and leisure complexes ever to be developed in Northumberland – are progressing well, with the structural steel frame for the secondary school now in place.

It will include a new secondary and primary school, along with leisure and cultural facilities and sports pitches including 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 is being funded by Northumberland County Council and built by Kier Construction.

Five Year 9 students visited the site with headteacher Kieran McGrane, who said they were very impressed by the work taking place: “It was fascinating to see the steel structure starting to take shape.

“Our visit also provided myself and the students with a real sense of the scale of the building work and development being undertaken. We all agreed that it will be a

huge improvement on our current buildings.”

The students joined Northumberland County Council Leader Peter Jackson, deputy leader and cabinet member for children's services, Coun Wayne Daley, and representatives of Kier Construction and other members of the development team.

Coun Daley said: “I think the students were very impressed by the start of the steelwork construction, and to see the work going on at the site in general.

“It is very important that we involve the schools in the development as it progresses and, who knows, one of these young people may be inspired to pursue a career related to the construction industry.

“This development is going to provide a fantastic educational and cultural facility for the community and I very much look forward to tracking its progress.”

Brian McQuade, Managing Director of Kier Regional Building – Scotland & North East added: “We are delighted to be able to deliver the next generation of leisure and school facilities at this ground-breaking development in Ponteland.

“As the finished facilities here will be used by local people for years to come, it is important for us to not only leave

a legacy for the local area by involving them in our works but also to the youngsters themselves.

“They are the future of the area and the next generation of engineers that might want to consider a career in construction as a result of what they learn from us here.”

The new schools are part of a reorganisation of the Ponteland Partnership which is seeing a £52m investment in schools including extensions to some primary schools and the new school at Darras Hall.

After completion of the new buildings, the existing Ponteland Leisure Centre will be demolished and sports pitches established there.

Work is also underway to expand the accommodation on the existing high school site, to ensure that temporary accommodation can be provided to allow additional secondary pupils to start this September. The schools and leisure development is scheduled for completion by September 2020.

Work has also started on construction of a new fire station on Callerton Lane which will replace the old station being displaced by the development. This is due to be complete by the end of this year (see article on p15).

Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Two very different views of the local environment in this month's letters...

Thanks to all involved in the bridleway refurbishment

The article in the June edition of Pont News about the refurbished bridleway led me to take a walk down there at the earliest opportunity.

I would like to thank and congratulate Veronica, Alma, Ponteland Community Partnership and all volunteers for their excellent work on this former railway track from Callerton Lane to the Airport.

The last time I walked the path it entailed climbing over dangerous fallen branches and kicking back nettles.

Now it is lovely (see my photo here). I walked in showers but birds were singing and buttercup meadows zinging.

Trees and wildflowers helped pay tribute to lots of hard work. The panels and signs were good too.

Thank you and well done

Ann Cooper

Guardian's Court, Ponteland



The Pont - village river or open sewer?

Above Darras Hall, the Pont is teeming with flora and fauna. Yet in Ponteland's likely greatest asset, the park, runs brown and grey sewage with assorted sanitary materials clinging to a brown/grey slimy riverbed.

Much seems to emanate on regular occasion from the Fox Covert bridge sewer outlet and a short walk downstream sees children paddling and dogs playing in this raw sewage dilution.

Indeed the local vet regularly treats dogs ill from drinking River Pont water. Yet complaints to water companies/agencies fall on deaf ears, perhaps only attentive to more important matters such as current colossal pay packets, than irksome issues of public amenity.

I would recommend anyone to consider carefully entering the water or allowing their dog to drink from it and certainly to check for any discharges from Fox Covert sewer prior to any contemplation to enjoy the 'river' downstream.

Mr Steadman

Ponteland



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MH

August issue deadlines: Delivery of the August issue will start on Wednesday July 31st and be completed by Tuesday August 6th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Wednesday July 17th. 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 August 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...

Music in the Park

Sunday June 30th from 2pm to 5pm at Ponteland Park. FREE musical entertainment from Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel Band, Ponteland Community Band, The Ringtones and Pete Brown. Bring a picnic and deckchairs and enjoy a fantastic afternoon of outdoor entertainment with your friends and family. In the event of bad weather the event will be cancelled.

Ponteland Leisure Learning (U3A)

At our meeting at 2pm on Wednesday July 3rd in St Mary's Parish Centre our speaker will be Anthony Atkinson and his title '100 Top Geordies'. Visitors are always welcome – no charge. Visit u3asites.org.uk/Ponteland or call (01661) 822225.

Open Garden evening to raise funds for charity

Landowners Charles and Tina Enderby are hosting an exclusive celebration event to mark 25 years of Tynedale Hospice at Home. The Summer Evening Reception & Open Garden is being held at the Grade II listed The Riding, Acomb, Hexham, NE46 4PF on Friday July 5th from 6.30pm – 8.30pm. Entrance fee of £15 or £25 for two includes a welcome drink, canapes (kindly provided by Saathi Indian Restaurant) and a £5 donation to Tynedale Hospice at Home. During the evening there will be live music, a vintage stall and a raffle with some exciting prizes on offer. Soft and alcoholic drinks will also be available. To book your place, email fundraising@tynedalehospice.com or call the Fundraising Team on 01434 606444.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Barry Mead will speak on 'Cresswell Pele Tower, Reivers and Ruins to Restoration' at our meeting on Monday July 8th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall. Visit: pontelandsgc.co.uk

Ponteland WI

Ponteland WI has a new venue for its monthly meetings - Merton Hall. Our next is at 7pm on Tuesday July 9th when Andrew Clark will be talking about the North East in the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

Ponteland Village WI

Our meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday July 9th in St Mary's Parish Centre will include a talk by Andrew Middleton of Northumberland Cheese Farm. Find us on Facebook - Ponteland Village WI - or email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com

Friends of Kirkley Hall

At our meeting at 7pm on Wednesday July 10th guest speaker Hugh Dixon will talk about the acclaimed wood engraver, artist and natural history author Thomas Bewick, who was born in 1753 and whose work is still prized and admired to this day. Venue: Kirkley Hall. Cost: £3 for non-members, £2 for members. Contact: friendsofkirkleyhall@gmail.com or 07551 974955. Visit: friendsofkirkleyhall.org

Kirkley Hall hosts production of Wind in the Willows

Quantum Theatre present their brand new adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's family favourite Wind in the Willows at Kirkley Hall at 6.30pm on Tuesday July 16th. Tickets from £8 can be purchased online at quantumtheatre.co.uk/events/kirkley-hall

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 July 17th (enter via back door). Visit: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

On Monday July 22nd from 2pm to 4pm at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, Moira Short is running a mini workshop – Beadwork (small charge for kit). All welcome, £4. Contact: Penny Ford at penelopeford636@btinternet.com or (01670) 788278.

My Life in Gardens: a talk by Susie White

Writer, lecturer and photographer Susie White, who has a lifetime's gardening experience, is holding a talk for the Campaign to Protect Rural England at 7.30pm on Tuesday July 23rd at Corbridge Parish Hall. The

author of eight gardening books, her work regularly features in magazines and newspapers. For 23 years she ran Chesters Walled Garden in Northumberland and has since created a garden for her own Northumbrian home which has featured on Gardeners' World. CPRE members free, others pay £5 on the door. Contact: annie.cpre@gmail.com or 07739 300692 or visit northumberland.cprelocalgroups.org.uk

Walking for health

Free weekly health walks every Tuesday at 10.30am at Ponteland Leisure Centre. All welcome. Assistance dogs only. Contact Gordon Allan on 07936 135469 for more information.

Inner Wheel Club of Ponteland

We meet the first Tuesday of each month. Speakers, cup of tea and sometimes an outing etc. Any lady interested should contact Eleanor Carr on (01661) 871768 for further information.

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.

Line dancing

We meet on Wednesdays at 6.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Ponteland. We have lots of laughs, friendship and exercise to music. Cost £20 for ten sessions. Dancing is at beginner and intermediate level. New dancers always welcome. Free taster session offered. Contact Rosemary Gray on (01661) 822493.

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

Events offer outdoor evening entertainment with a difference in July

Two very different events are offering outdoor evening entertainment options with a difference in July.



First, on Friday July 5th, landowners Charles and Tina Enderby are hosting an exclusive celebration event to mark 25 years of Tynedale Hospice at Home.

The Summer Evening Reception & Open Garden is being held at the Grade II listed The Riding, Acomb, Hexham, NE46 4PF on Friday July 5th from 6.30pm – 8.30pm. The entrance fee of £15 or £25 for two includes a welcome drink, canapes (kindly provided by Saathi Indian Restaurant) and a £5 donation to Tynedale Hospice at Home.

During the evening there will be live music, a vintage stall and a raffle with some exciting prizes on offer. Soft

and alcoholic drinks will also be available.

To book your place, email fundraising@tynedalehospice.com or call the Fundraising Team on 01434 606444.

Then, on Tuesday July 16th, Kirkley Hall is hosting an outdoor production of Wind in the Willows.

London's Quantum Theatre are presenting their brand new adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's family favourite Wind in the Willows on the lawn at Kirkley Hall at 6.30pm on Tuesday July 16th.

Tickets from £8 can be purchased online at quantumtheatre.co.uk/events/kirkley-hall

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Schedules out for the annual Ponteland Parish Flower Show

Show schedules are now available for this year's Ponteland Parish Flower Show.

Keen gardeners and people with a talent for handicrafts, photography, cooking and wine making are being urged to start planning for the 42nd annual show, being held on Saturday September 14th at Ponteland Memorial Hall.

In addition to the extensive traditional flower, fruit, and vegetable classes for the gardeners, there are again plenty of classes for cookery, photography, handicraft, wines and spirits and for children.

The show schedules listing all the various categories, including revised cookery and

children's classes, and entry forms can be downloaded at pontelandflowershow.co.uk with hard copies available at the Post Office, library, Ponteland Hardware and at Alan Newton Butchers.

Photography will be judged against this year's new topics of flowers, Northumberland, Ponteland village life, clouds and animals - and for children 'my holidays'. Flower displays staged by local flower clubs are once again being featured.

One more date for your diary is the 2019 Ponteland Rotary Annual Duck Race. This year's event is in Ponteland Park from 12.30pm on Sunday 1st September.

Prizewinning tomatoes at last year's show. Photo courtesy of Ponteland Online.



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Latest news from Ponteland Town Council

Poppy project to raise awareness of wartime sacrifices

The Town Council has agreed to launch a project this year to continue raising the awareness of young people about the sacrifices made during wartime. The Poppy Project will provide more help for young people in the area who want to get involved in community issues. Grants of up to £250 will be available for young people aged under 21, including groups of friends, Scout or Guide groups, schools with special projects and others with projects which benefit people in the community. Projects can include litter picking, working towards Duke of Edinburgh awards, sports projects, charity events etc. Application forms are available from the Town Council on request.

Bin to be installed on bridle path

The Council agreed a recommendation from the Environment Working Party which met on May 13th to install a dog waste/litter bin on the bridle path near to Penny Pieces, where the three paths converge, at an approximate cost of £300.

Environmental projects given financial support

Two environmental projects have been given financial support by the Town Council. Following grant applications, councillors awarded £1,500 to Richard Coates School towards the creation and installation of a mosaic for the sensory garden to commemorate the school's 300th anniversary this year. A £350 grant was also approved for Holy Saviour Church at Milbourn towards ground maintenance costs.

Annual Audit of Accounts 2017-18

The Town Council considered documentation relating to the year-

end audit for 2018-19. The information was approved, and it was noted that the Annual Governance and Accountability Statement and Accounting Statement was being published on the website on June 14th. The period for the exercise of public rights starts Monday 17th June and ends on Friday 26th July. See information on the Town Council's website at ponteland-tc.gov.uk and on public notice boards.

Approvals for use of Ponteland Park

Councillors have approved two requests for the use of Ponteland Park. Permission was given to the Rotary Club to hold the Duck Race in the park on Sunday September 1st and to a yoga teacher holding a free outdoor session in the park on Saturday June 29th with any donations going to Parkinsons UK.

Northumberland County Council report

Coun Richard Dodd reported that the Northumberland Local Plan had been submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on May 29th for examination. As mentioned at last month's meeting, as part of its Housing Strategy the County Council is considering the provision of up to 1,000 council houses in the county. Details of possible sites have not yet been discussed but the Town Council has expressed interest in being involved in any plans for Ponteland. Councillors were also told that a meeting had been held with the company working on the new school and leisure complex which was progressing well (see article on p9).

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



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Call for more retained firefighters as work starts on new fire station

An appeal for new retained firefighters has been launched as work starts on the construction of a new community fire station in Ponteland.

The new station on Callerton Lane will replace the existing 1970s building which is being displaced by the development of two new schools, a leisure centre and sports facilities in the area.

The new site will include a single-storey, seven-metre-high fire station, a 14-metre-high training tower, a training yard and 13 parking bays and will provide modern state of the art facilities for the fire and rescue service. There will also be new trees and landscaping on the site.

Northumberland County Council Leader Peter Jackson cut the first sod to get work underway, accompanied by Coun John Riddle, Cabinet Member responsible for Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, Mark McCarty, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and other representatives of the council, fire and rescue service and Kier Construction.

Coun Riddle said: "It is great to see work on the new fire station get underway. This development is securing fire and rescue services for Ponteland and the surrounding areas, as well as providing the most up to date equipment and working environment for our firefighters."

Mark McCarty, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, added: "The station will give us continuity of service across the Ponteland area and provide up to date and improved facilities for our Ponteland firefighters."

"We are currently recruiting for 'on call' firefighter positions at Ponteland and would encourage anyone interested to email fire.recruitment@northumberland.gov.uk."

The building on the current site will be demolished to make way for the new schools and leisure development, with the new station due to be completed this autumn, after which services will transfer there.

Retained firefighters are contracted for two hours per week to attend training sessions, as well as additional hours per week to be available on-call to attend emergency call-outs and to

deliver community safety work.

The role can be combined with another job, however retained firefighters must live no further than five minutes travel time from their local fire station and must be able to

give the level of availability required.

For more information visit: northumberland.gov.uk/Fire/Recruitment

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Mark McCarty, Coun Peter Jackson, Coun John Riddle and Roddy Graham from Kier Construction.



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Partnership's work recognised by county council

A group of volunteers has been recognised for their work to improve the local quality of life for people in Ponteland.

Ponteland Community Partnership was among a number of community organisations presented with a certificate by Northumberland County Council to acknowledge its work on recent environment and healthy living initiatives.

PCP's key projects which have enjoyed support from the Community Chest fund have included a recently completed four year scheme to revamp a Ponteland wildlife corridor – the bridleway from Callerton Lane to the Airport.

This has been linked to healthy living, with the installation of step counts at five points along the two mile route.

Another recent initiative has been the launch of free health checks at Ponteland Medical Centre. The monthly drop-ins held every second Friday of the month have proved extremely popular, with blood pressure, BMI and weight checked by a medical professional.

Other groups to have received Community Chest funding included Morpeth Group Riding for the Disabled Association, Barnesbury Cycling Club, Collingwood School & Media Arts College, Morpeth Amateur Runners Association, Coquet Shorebase Trust, and The Morpeth Antiquarian Society.

PCP Chairman Alma Dunigan (front centre) received the certificate at a meeting of the Castle Morpeth Local Area Council at County Hall, Morpeth.

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Holiday club offers summer fun for schoolchildren

Parents looking for ideas to entertain their children during the summer holidays are being offered an action-packed week at a church's holiday club.

Ponteland Methodist Church is running the Backpackers Holiday Club from 10am to 12noon each day from Monday July 29th to Friday August 2nd.

Billed as a week of travel-based fun and games, the club will be based on Scripture Union's Backpackers holiday club material.

It will include creative teaching, games, craft, songs, prayers and Bible reading as the children travel with Jesus during his last week on earth and explore what his death and resurrection mean to people everywhere.

The holiday club is open to all children aged five to 11 (Reception to Year 6). There is a suggested donation of £2.50 per day or £10 for the five days.

The week will end on Saturday August 3rd with a free Family Fun Day open to all ages from 12noon to 3pm including a BBQ, bouncy castle, games and refreshments in the garden at the back of the church.

Holiday club leader Alison Maynard said: "I'm really looking forward to this year's holiday club. It will be great fun, we'll learn a lot and it would be fantastic if lots of children come along."

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Jeni takes over the reins at village WI

One of Ponteland's most vibrant community groups has selected a new president after its co-founder stepped down.

Rachel Bowey Bland set up Ponteland Village WI with her two sisters six years ago and as president has built it up to a membership of nearly 50 local ladies.

However, she decided to step down this spring and the group has now voted in new president Jeni Brownlee.

Rachel, who has two young sons, said: "When we set up the group six years ago we couldn't imagine what a great success it has become. It has been a privilege to watch the group grow, to watch so many friendships bloom and

to see members enjoy so many talks and activities."

Ponteland Village WI meets on the second Tuesday of each month, except August, at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Ponteland. New members are welcome. Sub-groups include a walking group, monthly dining out club, 'cycling for softies' and book and film clubs.

New president Jeni added: "I am delighted to pick up the reins of such a successful and happy group. Rachel will be a hard act to follow, but she is staying on the committee so we will all benefit from her experience."

Find the group on Facebook - Ponteland Village WI or email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com for more information.

New president Jeni Brownlee (left) with Rachel Bowey Bland



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A photograph of a young woman with red hair, wearing a purple polo shirt, smiling and talking to an elderly woman with short grey hair, wearing a patterned cardigan. They are in a kitchen, and the young woman is holding a green colander. The background shows a kitchen counter with various items. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for the Care Quality Commission with the text "Inspected and rated Outstanding" and a star. In the bottom right corner, there is the Home Instead Senior Care logo with the tagline "To us, it's personal."



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