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The sound of music inspires park concert success

Hundreds of spectators got in the groove celebrating Ponteland's tenth annual Music in the Park extravaganza.

They descended on Ponteland Park to hear the Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel Band, Ponteland Community Band, The Ringtones and Pete Brown.

Although the weather proved mixed, Ponteland Town Council said the free show proved a great success with those who played and sang - and with the enthusiastic audience.

The Town Council would like to thank Jim Robertson for booking the acts over the last 10 years and also thank the representatives from Ponteland Rotary and Lions for all of their help during that time.



Photos by Barry Pells



Thefts drop, but light nights bring anti-social warning



By PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

While the number of thefts has fallen, damage and anti-social behaviour-related incidents have increased, so Ponteland residents need to remain crime aware.

Although there have been relatively few theft-related crimes to residential properties in the past month, crime prevention measures should continue to be considered.

Unfortunately, a combination of lighter nights and the pending school holidays brought an unwelcome increase in anti-social behaviour and damage.

Anti-social behaviour, which can have a significant impact on an individual or community, can often stem from issues such as:

- Underage drinking and drug misuse
- Groups of young people causing a disturbance
- Illegal use of motorbikes
- Arson, vandalism or graffiti
- Loud music, harassment or rowdy behaviour
- Cycling or skateboarding on pavements.

The good news is that police and the local authority have a variety of powers available to address these problems, including:

- One-off fines (fixed-penalty notices), and penalty notices for disorder
- Parenting orders
- Individual support orders to tackle the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour
- Tenancy notices and noise abatement notices
- Injunctions
- Dispersal powers, such as moving crowds away from problem areas.

Residents should ensure their child is fully aware of the possible consequences of being involved in anti-social behaviour - they should ask themselves: "Do you know where your child is?"

Cold callers

A number of complaints have been received regarding cold callers and unsolicited door-to-door sales.

Police receive regular reports of ex-offenders from Cleveland peddling household goods to residents, often being aggressive when asked to leave.

Anyone peddling goods or services should have appropriate identification, as well as a peddlers' certificate or permit, to operate in the area.

If they cannot produce a valid permit, or you have concerns regarding their authenticity, please contact the police.

Poaching issues

With the move in to harvest time, poachers are already accessing freshly cut fields in unlawful pursuit of hare, deer and other game.

They show no consideration or respect for our countryside, and will often cause injury or death to livestock, regularly leaving attacked animals in fields and gateways.

There are also reports of threatening behaviour towards farmers, gamekeepers and others who depend on their livelihood in the rural area.

Poachers have been known to drive vehicles across fields and cause damage to gates, fencing and crops, and they add to acquisitive rural crime across the region.

Vermin control

Authorised vermin control, or lamping, is an activity that takes place throughout the year.

During such times, it is a common for people conducting lawful activity to contact and advise the police of their activity.

It is important to call the police if you see anything suspicious, or unauthorised lamping or poaching.

When telephoning, please give an accurate description of what you see happening.

The most obvious sign is a group of vehicles parked by a gateway to farmland, on a grass verge, farm track or bridle path.

Such information not only assists the attending officer so they know what they are looking for, but also helps us gather evidence, and progress.

Community Speedwatch

Community Speedwatch Volunteers have deployed in Ponteland and Prestwick areas over recent weeks.

In the last four weeks, 64 vehicles were recorded speeding, resulting in 57 warning letters issued to registered keepers.

Contact a member of East Tynedale Neighbourhood Team:
prudhoe.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk



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Estate goes on the market after axeing of giant housing scheme

A country estate on Ponteland's doorstep has been put up for sale, just months after a controversial bid to build 2,000 homes on it was scrapped.

The 2,523-acres Dissington Estate, to the west of the town, is now available to buy, but at a sum which has yet to be publicly disclosed.

And its future still remains uncertain, with the land available in its entirety - or possibly as individual lots, sales agents say.

It is being advertised as a 'significant long-term development opportunity' by commercial property firm Cushman & Wakefield.

In January, Newcastle developer Lugano dropped its application with Northumberland County Council to transform the land into the Dissington Garden Village.

The firm's move followed a series of claims and counter claims between it and the council which appeared to be heading to the High Court.

In March 2017, the council handed Lugano a minded-to-approve resolution,



A buyer is being sought for the Dissington Estate

indicating it would look favourably on the development plan.

But that changed when the Conservatives took office two months later, leading to the withdrawal of a previous core strategy in favour of a new Local Plan, forcing the re-evaluation of the garden village project.

Lugano then accused the council, its Leader Peter Jackson, chief executive Daljit Lally and cabinet member for planning John Riddle, of misfeasance in public office over the way its planning bid had been treated - allegations which were vehemently denied by the council and Coun Jackson.

In March, Lugano discontinued its legal

claim, and the estate was revealed to no longer be owned by Lugano Property Group, the company arm dealing with the planning bid.

According to Cushman & Wakefield, the estate boasts five farms and 10 residential properties, three of which are freehold and seven tenanted.

Properties include Dalton Hillhead Farm, East House Farm, West Houses Farm, and Eastwick Bridge House Farm, with land also available at Dissington Red House Farm.

Land for sale also includes the 11-acres The Paddock, an area for grazing located to the west of Medburn.

Senseless vandalism prompts funds appeal

An appeal has been issued to catch the culprit who destroyed a valued roadside education pedestal in Ponteland.

The information board, on Rotary Way, was needlessly smashed to pieces on Sunday, July 7.

The Ponteland Community Partnership, which has worked with the local community to revamp of the Bridleway over the past four years, said it was dismayed by the vandalism.

It now wants to replace the pedestal and has contacted the manufacturer, but lacks the money to renew.



Anyone who would like to contribute to fundraising, or help in other ways, should visit pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Sky's the limit as pensioner adventurer hits the heights of his ambition

Retired aerospace engineer Alan Mitcham has proved age is no barrier to fulfilling life's dreams - by reaching the peak of one of Western Europe's highest mountains four months after his 76th birthday.

The grandfather-of-six scaled the 4,808m-tall Mont Blanc in the Alps during a three-day challenge in July.

Incredibly, Alan, of The Rise, Darras Hall, climbed the 4,060m Gran Paradiso, Italy's tallest mountain, during a practice run just three days earlier.

His conquest of Mont Blanc came 18 years after a previous attempt was dashed by bad weather, leading him to believe the opportunity had forever slipped by.

The married dad-of-three completed the successful climbs with friends and fellow mountaineers Graham Turner, 53,



Alan Mitcham, centre, at the summit of Mont Blanc with, left, Graham Turner, and Neil Waters

from Hexham, and Neil Waters, 63, from Wylam.

Alan said: "Reaching the summit gave me a nice sense of achievement, it had been on my list for such a long time.

"I'd been thwarted in my attempt in 2001 and thought it likely the chance had gone.

"But a year ago, Graham told me that he was considering attempting the climb and it occurred to me that I could do it.

"You need so much good luck to achieve this climb, and we got it. It was a perfect day for climbing, with blue skies and good weather.

"We hit snow at about 3,300m and it was pretty tough and quite challenging on the upper part of the summit.

"When we got to the top, the scenery was quite dramatic, it was early morning and the sun was rising."

Alan, Graham and Neil undertook the climbs with specialist holiday firm Adventure Base, being supported each time by two expert guides.

They took Mont Blanc's tramway to a height of 2,500m, and then climbed a further 700m to the Tête Rousse overnight mountain hut base.

At 5am the following day, they set off to cover the last 1,700m, reaching the summit six hours later, remaining there for 15 minutes to celebrate their achievement.

Alan, a member of the Tyne Valley Mountaineers club and a keen skier, is now planning his next adventure – a trek of the super-tough 110 mile-long GR20 route in Corsica.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Will the investment industry never learn?

By David Lamb, Lamb and Associates

Last month I was sat in Italy reading about the unfolding saga of 'star' fund manager Neil Woodford, contemplating what a sorry state financial services is in, and how sad that I have to be connected to such a poorly run industry to do the job I am passionate about.

Intermingled with articles on social media about Mr Woodford were various adverts, including: a happy chappy dancing in the street because apparently the Halifax is refunding £40bn; offers to check if you have PPI, suggesting you consider transferring your defined benefit pension; 'free' pension reviews; fund platforms explaining what went wrong with the Woodford funds; other platforms explaining the problems with Best Buy lists; and another well-known platform promoting itself as an expert whilst completely ignoring the bad press it has been getting because of its involvement with the Woodford funds.

What a mess! No wonder a large part of the public does not trust the financial services industry, and those who work in it.

Financial advisers often have an alphabet spaghetti of qualifications, 30+ years of experience, pin striped suits and red braces. And where does it get us? The aforementioned mess.

I have 35 years' experience within financial services, 27 of which have been based in Ponteland as Lamb and Associates, I have some good qualifications, but no pinstriped suit or red braces.

What is really sad is that amongst all the above adverts, opinions, mess, another article appeared.

'British pensioners will run out of money before they die, senior economists warn.'

The World Economic Forum's study suggests that British pensioners could run out of money 10 years before they die and will simply have to earn more if they want a comfortable retirement.

Is this the lifestyle people want? Probably not, but are they going to be confident to seek help from the financial services industry? Again, probably not.

Fortunately, there are good, genuine financial planners out there who could really help these people, if they were not tarred with the same brush.

Over the next few months, I am going to consider the issues with the financial services industry, what causes them, why they are unlikely to go away and how a genuine financial planner can be an invaluable asset. See my next column in the September issue of Pont News & Views.

Fundraising triathletes lead the way in remembering cancer fight mum

Friends have celebrated the life of a much-loved mother and doctor by powering through an energy-sapping bike ride, swim and run in her memory.

Around 170 competitors took part in Ponteland Triathlon Club's test of endurance, many in honour of Alison Guadagno, who had battled a brain tumour but died in June.

Those taking part included 15 close pals, collectively known as the 'Cappuccino Crew', a group of runners and coffee drinkers of whom Alison was one.

Their participation came just days after the funeral of the mum-of-three, who lived in Ponteland and worked at the Great North Children's Hospital, in Newcastle.

They say they were determined to press ahead with their involvement in an event in which they dressed as Elastigirl, a character from The Incredibles animated film, to raise research funds.

During last year's Great North Run, Alison led a team of fundraisers who all dressed as Elastigirl, standing out enough from fellow runners to feature in the BBC's race coverage.

Friend Andrea Banner said: "Ponteland Tri Club's nominated charity was Brain Research Trust in honour of Alison, who died of a brain tumour a couple of weeks before the event.

"Although the event took place only two days after Ali's funeral, the team of Incredibles decided to proceed with their participation in the triathlon.

"Ali had liaised with Ponteland Tri Club and asked whether it could support the Brain Research Trust and have some of her Incredibles running and fundraising crew take part in the event in relay teams.

"As Ali was a founding member of Ponteland Running Club, the sister club to Pont Tri, the club was happy to oblige."

She added: "Eight of the Elastigirls were complete novices to the triathlon, so there was much to learn in a short space of time.

"Two other Incredibles volunteered as marshals along the cycle and run route, and the Incredibles organised a cake stall selling their own bakes, and cakes donated by friends and family members."

The triathlon consisted of a 16-length swim in Ponteland Leisure Centre's pool, a 12-

mile bike ride starting from the leisure centre, and six-kilometre run, consisting of two laps along the bridle path from Callerton Lane to Rotary Way, ending at the centre.

The girls' Great North Run exploits, and a second fundraiser, raised over £30,000. Money raised in the triathlon included £362 from a cake stall, and Pont Tri has also pledged a donation.



Members of the 'Cappuccino Crew', who supported the triathlon

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Michael Bayley

Golfer gets in the swing for money-raising charity challenge

A golfer is celebrating a landmark birthday by taking aim on a 60-hole challenge to raise hundreds of pounds for two charities.

Ponteland Golf Club player Michael Bayley admits turning 60 in June was the spur to the ultimate test of his fairways and greens prowess.

He will get in the swing on Sunday, August 11, striding onto the 6,500 yard-long course at 7am with his brother-in-law Andrew Morgan.

Health and safety adviser Michael, raised in Ponteland but now living in Tynemouth, is supporting the Bobby Robson Foundation and Hospice Care North Northumberland, in Alnwick.

Others encouraging him on his quest include his son Elliot, 23, a former

Ponteland club junior champion, who will play alongside on some holes.

Over £700 has already been pledged, but dad-of-two Michael hopes more will be added to his fundraising pot.

He said: "I got to 60 and thought about what I could do to mark the occasion. This is a bit of a daunting challenge but I'm committed to it. I think I will be okay.

"It's not just the walking that is tiring, it's also the fact that you are swinging around a golf club.

"I'm sure I'll be pretty tired by the end of the day, but I'm in training at the moment and have lost 9lbs in weight with another 6lbs to go before the day.

"I think the challenge has not been attempted by anyone of my age at the club. The club is being very supportive."

Michael, who plays off a nine handicap,

has represented the club on various occasions over the 45 years he has been a member.

He has enjoyed success on the Ponteland course before, having won the club championship in 1985.

Three years earlier, he won a national long driving championship, and in 1984 clinched a national old schoolboys foursomes' championship.

Money is being raised through sponsorship, with forms available in the clubhouse.

Supporters can win a bottle of champagne by correctly guessing the total number of shots played on the day and the time the 'quest' ends.

Donations can also be made at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/michaelbayley>



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



A letter leads to a swift solution to a school bus parking problem this month...

Solution required to end problem of buses parking on double yellow lines

Millions has been spent on the new Darras Hall Primary School. But apparently a pick up point for the pupils to go to the local swimming pool is outside the school premises on double yellow lines because a regular size single deck bus cannot access the school car park!

We on Middle Drive have endured years of inconvenience due to inconsiderate parking and now a school bus sees fit to breach regulations. Please find a solution soon.

I think it is important to flag up the issue that coaches cannot get in and out of the car park. This has many ramifications including breaking the law by parking on double yellow lines on the road, as well as health and safety issues for the children.

It is surely a very poor oversight in the design, knowing that children require coaches to go to the swimming pool and on regular trips.

Gill Taylor

Middle Drive, Darras Hall

A spokesperson for Northumberland County Council responded: "Pick up and drop off on the roadside adjacent to the school has happened occasionally, when the bus company had had to bring a larger coach. At other times, with smaller coaches, they have always picked up from inside the school grounds.

"The school has now liaised with the bus company and agreed that even when a larger coach is used, they will pull into the school car park to pick up and drop off the students. Turning the larger coach requires a small number of parking spaces in the car park to be coned off - but this can be managed by the school."

Environmental concerns for river

Your heart leaps with the salmon when one hears or reads about the progress we are making in improving our local environment.

A clean River Pont must be one of our aims. Do we realise that the gullies (grates) at the side of our roads collecting rainwater on the way to the Pont need to be free from contamination? Habit changes need an effort.

Remember, please, that oil, paint, cleaners and other substances put into the grate will end up facing the salmon who will then not leap.

Kathleen Farquhar

Pembroke Drive, Ponteland

September issue deadlines: Delivery of the September issue will start on Thursday August 29th and be completed by Wednesday September 4th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Thursday August 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 September 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.

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What's on...

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Dr Jared Johnson will speak on 'viruses, jumping genes and genetic engineering' at a meeting on Monday August 12th at 2.30pm in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall. Visit: pontelandsgc.co.uk

Ponteland Community Partnership

Come to observe a meeting and share your ideas, concerns and expectations for improving the quality of life in the community. All welcome. The next meeting at the Memorial Hall is at 7pm on Wednesday August 21st (enter via back door). Visit: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Ponteland Lions Club

With no business meeting in August, Ponteland Lions Club will run its monthly Charity Fund bookstall at Waitrose, from 9am to 4pm on Saturday, August 31st. Its next business meeting will be on Wednesday, September 11th at 7.30pm in Merton Hall. Visitors are welcome. Contact the club on 0845 8339913.

Duck Race

The Ponteland Rotary Annual Duck Race 2019 takes place on Sunday, September 1st in Ponteland Park, starting at 12.30pm. Join in the fun and see plastic ducks take to the River Pont, and extra entertainment included.

Wildlife Group get-together

The Ponteland Wildlife Group is starting its new season of events on Tuesday, September 3rd., when Tim Mason will talk about 'Birdwatching in Eastern Europe, Norway to Bulgaria'. It starts at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. On Tuesday, October 1st, Liz Clark will talk about 'Small, Spiky and Seriously Endangered, Hedgehogs in Northumberland', at 7.30pm at the same venue. Admission £2 including refreshments.

Whistling Sheep Ceilidh Band

The band meets on alternate Mondays after school at Ponteland High School, with its first session at 3.30pm on Monday, September 9th. Pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 are welcome those from Year 9 who already play. Information is at www.whistlingssheep.co.uk. The band is also available to play at events.

Flower Show

The 42nd Ponteland Parish Flower Show is on Saturday, September 14th at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Classes include flower, fruit, vegetables, best cookery, handicrafts, wine and spirits, and photography, and some classes are open to children. Entry forms can be downloaded at pontelandflowershow.co.uk.

Ponteland WI

Due to there being no meeting in August, Ponteland WI has planned an outing to include a visit to the Friary in Alnmouth, and Beadnell.

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.

Ponteland Writers

This is a friendly group with mixed writing ability and experience which meets 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 meets 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

New members are welcome to join a 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 walks in Northumberland and North Durham on alternate Sundays and two Wednesdays each 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

Players of Duplicate Bridge meet every Friday at 7pm at Merton Hall, with about 20 boards tackled. Partners can be found, if needed. Contact Pete Ford on peteford24@hotmail.com or on 07739 208308.

Rotary Club of Ponteland

The Rotary Club of Ponteland meets every Tuesday at Ponteland Golf Club, alternating between lunch times (1st and 3rd Tuesdays) and evenings (2nd and 4th Tuesdays). New people members are welcome. Contact Alan Hall at alanhalleef@msn.com or on (01661) 860284.

Ponteland Methodist Church Carpet Bowls Club

This friendly club meets on Mondays from 1.30pm to 3.30pm and Fridays

from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Experience not necessary. For further info contact Barbara on (01661) 824652.

Line Dancing

Dancers meet every Wednesday at 6.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall, Ponteland, offering laughs, friendship and exercise to music, at £20 for 10 sessions. Dancing is at beginner and intermediate level and new dancers are always welcome. A free taster session is offered. Contact Rosemary Gray (01661) 822493.

Inner Wheel Club of Ponteland

This group meets the first Tuesday of each month, with speakers, cups of tea and occasional days out. Any lady interested should contact Eleanor Carr on (01661) 871768.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

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

Pont Badminton Club

Enthusiasts meet every Friday evening between 7.30pm and 9pm at Ponteland Leisure Centre, with adults of all ages assured a warm welcome. Turn up, or call 07986 388822 for more information.

Ponteland Methodist Church

The Bridge is a relaxed church service which welcomes everyone to have fun, make friends, learn about Jesus and the Bible. It meets most Sundays in Ponteland Methodist Church Hall at 10am for tea, coffee, catch up, music and a short talk. There are separate activities for children, including a new Sunday Club for those in reception to Year 8, at 4pm, also on Sundays. For more info email bridge.ponteland@gmail.com, contact rchudson@btinternet.com or find The Bridge at Ponteland Methodist Church on Facebook.

Ponteland Ladies' Choir

Anyone interested in joining a friendly group of singers with a young, enthusiastic conductor can meet at Ponteland Methodist Church, in Bell Villas, on Mondays from 7.15pm to 9pm in term time. No audition needed. Contact Brenda on (01661) 821704 or Rosie on (01661) 871663.

Creative Writing Group

Led by a qualified tutor, this class aims to inspire and encourage the writing of poetry and stories through stimulating workshop sessions in a friendly and supportive group. New or experienced writers welcome. It meets on Wednesday mornings at 9.30am in members' homes around Ponteland. Contact Claire at claire@claire276.plus.com or on (01434) 605276.



John Mew

Hills and high waters for forces veteran's new charity challenges

A Falklands veteran is getting set for a double adventure challenge as he takes his next steps on the road to full health.

Over three days this month, John Mew, 61, will trek 86 miles along Hadrian's Wall to raise money for two good causes.

And in September, John, from Dissington, aims to sail the English Channel in the traditional three-masted Tall Ship the Lord Nelson as part of the D-Day 75th anniversary celebrations.

Through his wall walk, he will fundraise for Forward Assist, a specialist veteran's charity based in Dudley, Northumberland, and the Newcastle Falcons Rugby Foundation, with the armed forces charity SSAFA benefiting from his sailing exploits.

His deeds stem from his horrifying experience of being on board HMS

Coventry, which was hit and sunk by Argentine bombs during the 1982 conflict, with the loss of 20 crew.

He has suffered from anxiety and depression and was recently diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

John said: "I was on the bridge of HMS Coventry when we were hit by three 1,000lb bombs. It is all a bit of a blur and I still get flashbacks and do not like to be in confined spaces.

"This is my chance to give something back to the many people who have helped me through difficult times. The two latest challenges are also something to focus on and give me a new target.

"I am now well on the road to recovery although there is still a long way to go."

He added: "It is an absolute honour and a once in a lifetime opportunity to sail a Tall Ship in the open seas. It will be hard work and challenging, but I am really looking forward to it."

John served in the Royal Navy for 12 years as a physical training instructor, ship's diver and as a member of the Portsmouth Command Field Gun Crew.

He was invited by SSAFA to be part of the crew on the Lord Nelson on a trip which sets out from the Thames, alongside the moored HMS Belfast, on Thursday, September 26, arriving at its destination on Wednesday, October 2.

It will sail 220 nautical miles to Caen, France, before passing through Pegasus Bride and visiting the new British Normandy Museum.

Its crew will be joined in Normandy by World War Two veterans, before returning 110 nautical miles back to Portsmouth.

John's Hadrian's Wall challenge, from Friday, August 16th to Sunday, August 18th, can be supported with donations at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JohnMew

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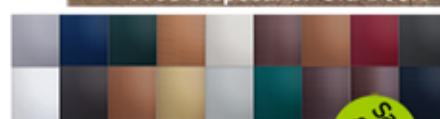
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Talent gets ready to blossom at flower festival

One of Ponteland's biggest, best and most firmly rooted annual events is taking shape in readiness of coming to fruition next month.

Organisers say the Ponteland Parish Flower Show – being held this year for the 42nd time - is a cause for celebration for people with, or without green fingers.

Dozens of classes can be entered on Saturday, September 14th at Ponteland Memorial Hall, including flower, fruit, and vegetables.

But it is not only the fruits of gardeners' labours that are on display, as entrants can also compete for best cookery, handicrafts, wine and spirits, and photography.

Children will be catered for in classes which include making a collage using any media, printing with fruit and vegetables, and small animal model using recycled materials.

They also have their own photography competition – on a theme of 'my holidays' - and can write a limerick, and paint.

The show attracts keen gardeners from across the region, and new topics this year include photography whose topics include Northumberland, Ponteland village life, clouds, and animals.

And the show will again feature flower displays staged by local flower clubs.

Gardeners wishing to take part in any of the various categories can download entry forms at pontelandflowershow.co.uk.

Photo courtesy of Colin Morgan

Council's Poppy Project to support life skills

Young people in Ponteland can prove themselves good citizens in a new project that looks to the future while remembering the past.



Groups of two or more people aged 21 or under can apply for a grant of up to £250 under Ponteland Town Council's Poppy Project, which aims to help the development of essential life skills.

The money must be used on a scheme that benefits people in this age group, either as individuals or as groups.

Applicants can be friends working together, Scouts or Guides, a team aiming for a Duke of Edinburgh award, a school with a special project, or a garden or art initiative at an old people's home.

They could also be a school debating society, a local democracy workshop, or people who give careers talks, work

to support sports projects, or a charity event or litter pick.

Ponteland mayor Alan Varley, pictured, said: "The 2018 events to mark 100 years from the end of the First World War were far-reaching.

"Ponteland held and supported a wide variety of events, with an emphasis on helping to ensure that young people were aware of this and other wars.

"Ponteland councillors are concerned that now the commemorations are not filling the news media, those sacrifices are not forgotten.

"What better way of remembering the sacrifices of yesterday's youth than by helping the youth of today, the citizens and leaders of tomorrow?"

Application forms are available from Ponteland Town Council at enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk or by phoning 01661 825092.

More information is at
www.ponteland-tc.gov.uk

Latest news from Ponteland Town Council

Extension of swan neck lighting scheme agreed

Councillors have agreed to extend swan neck-style lighting in Ponteland's Conservation Area, specifically in Bell Villas, and to the bottom of the Meadowfield Industrial Estate entrance.

Invitation for participation in VE Day 75

The council has received information from Bruno Peek, the Pageant master for VE Day 75, inviting the Town Council to take part in the event. Various suggestions were debated, and it was agreed to defer consideration of this matter, pending discussions being held with the Vicar of St Mary's Church, Councillor Karen Overbury and the Clerk.

Request from Ponteland Community Partnership

The Town Council considered a letter from the Ponteland Community Partnership, asking it to accept responsibility for refurbishing the pedestals and way markers recently installed on the bridleway. The council felt unable to agree to this request, as there had already been an issue of vandalism of one of the pedestals. Councillors were also concerned at the potential replacement and insurance costs, particularly as an immediate replacement of the vandalised sign would be required.

Council recess planned for August

A suggestion was made in June not to hold a Town Council meeting in August, which is now agreed. Any urgent matters

will be delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, and, if anything of extreme urgency arises, a special meeting will be called.

Information signs placing agreed

The council has agreed a recommendation from the Working Party to install two information signs in the sensory garden, displaying artwork that had been previously commissioned showing some of the various species frequenting this space. This item had been included within the budget for this year.

Northumberland County Council report

Councillor Richard Dodd reported on forthcoming changes to the planning system and how it works at Northumberland County Council (NCC). He also stated that NCC was carrying out a review of polling stations, which would end on Monday, September 30th.

Mayor's report

During the meeting, the Mayor reported on his diary commitments for the past two months and for August.

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



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Ducks to water as annual race prepares for take-off

A once-a-year duck race taking place next month promises to be animal 'quackers' - and a whole lot of fun, organisers say.

They are gearing up for the 2019 Ponteland Rotary Annual Duck Race, an event they insist will put smiles on visitors' faces.

Dozens of competitors are expected to float their yellow-coloured toy plastic ducks downstream on the River Pont, with people young and old taking part.

Those behind the day of events, which start at around 12.30pm on Sunday, September 1st in Ponteland Park, say the ducks are a sight to behold and will bring joy to participants and viewers alike.

A full race programme runs across the afternoon, and a number of youngsters are also expected to join in the fun by sailing their home-made boats on the water.

And a range of other activities are also planned, including a bouncy slide, and ball-in-a-bucket and Smash the Rat challenges, with trade stands and hot food vendors also present.

The race is one of the main fundraising events for the Rotary Club of Ponteland.



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Animal magic in action at last year's North East Dog Festival



A dog takes a break from the action at the festival in 2018

Festival takes the lead for day of doggy delights

The North East Dog Festival is set to get tongues and tails wagging when it opens its doors to exhibitors, shows and displays next month.

Organisers describe the show, on Saturday, September 7, at Kirkley Hall, Ponteland, as being 'one-of-a-kind' and the 'doggy social event of the year'.

They are promising a day of fun, with highlights including main ring displays, have-a-go activities, competitions and retail stalls.

Over 130 exhibitors will display their wares, two dog shows will be held, and the East Anglian Staffordshire Bull Terrier Display Team will perform for the first time in the North East.

Visitors can also take a seat in the seminar marquee to listen to expert speakers, and they let their dogs take part in several hands-on activities on offer.

There is also a Dogs With Jobs Village, Sporting Dog Village, Clever Canines Village and a Nose2Tail Health Village for owners and their pets to enjoy.

An event spokeswoman said: "The North East Dog Festival will be setting the stage for a doggy extravaganza like you've never seen before, with everything from main ring displays to

wow, have-a-go activities to try, as well as competitions and shopping to entice.

"There's sure to be something to suit everyone. It's set to be a fantastic day out that the whole family can enjoy."

Show gates open at 9.30am, and early bird tickets, available until Saturday, August 31, priced at £7.50, or £10 per person on the gate. Under 16s, dogs and parking is free.

More information is available by visiting www.northeastdogfestival.com or emailing info@northeastdogfestival.com



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Estate agent praised as door closes on lengthy career

Respected estate agent Elaine Newbigin has been commended for her professionalism and expertise following her retirement from the sector after 49 years of service.

She has worked her last day at Sanderson Young's Ponteland branch, where she has been manager since 2002, leaving with a ringing endorsement from her bosses.

Company chairman Duncan Young described Elaine, who started her career in 1970 at Storey Sons & Parker, as having a passion for the industry which was "second to none".

He said: "Elaine has been a formidable and renowned character within the estate agency world, both in Newcastle in the early days and then over the last 20 years in the village of Ponteland and surrounding areas.



Elaine Newbigin has retired

"She's particularly well known in Ponteland and has been a great character within the community, involving herself heavily in the local sports scene and rugby clubs with her husband Keith and their three boys.

"Her professionalism, expertise and passion for the sector has been second to none.

"We wish her a very fond farewell and she leaves with a tremendous amount of thanks, appreciation and sincere wishes from all of us here at Sanderson Young."

In a move towards the future, Penny Wright, Sanderson Young's valuation manager, has been appointed new manager at the independent firm's Ponteland office.

Mr Young said she had vast experience in the property sector and was highly regarded across the region.

He added: "Under Penny's management and guidance, the Ponteland area and surrounding villages will continue to receive professional expertise, and high-quality homes, from a company which is very well known within this location.

"It's an exciting time for us as we continue to evolve and adapt to new challenges, and the ever-changing property marketplace."

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