

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



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for playing fair

Householders' fury as
development goes ahead

Crackdown on motorists
as retailer fits cameras

Children strike gold as project reaches half way

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Produced by Cian creative pr



Final bow as the team take on Brazil



The Ponteland players who represented England



Bella Russell flies the flag

Fair play victory makes team the biggest winners

Schoolgirl footballers from Ponteland have proved themselves winners even in defeat - by being named the world's nicest team despite losing all their matches.

The Ponteland Middle School players topped the fair play rankings when they enjoyed the remarkable achievement of representing England at the Danone Nations Cup.

During their seven 20-minute eight-a-side games in the world's largest tournament for 10 to 12-year-olds, held in Barcelona, Spain, they were highly competitive on the pitch.

However, they suffered 1-0 and 3-2 defeats to the USA, lost 2-0 and 3-1 to Canada, and were twice beaten 3-0 by France, the tournament's winners, in their six group games.

www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk

And in their final match, a seventh-eighth place play-off against a highly rated Brazil, they lost 2-0.

But they were quickly buoyed by clinching the title of the team that most met the competition's core principles of fair play, openness, and respect.

Teacher and coach Lewis Crane said: "The girls have been unbelievable, they had the times of their lives and did their country proud.

"The competition was unlike anything they had ever faced before but they rose to the challenge.

"They had group games against Canada and the USA, both nationally selected teams of the best girls in the country, and against France, whose Olympic Lyon's academy is the best women's team in the world.

"They were more than competitive and the scorelines reflect that, they were even 2-1 up against the USA in the second game."

He added: "Even taking part in this tournament was an incredible achievement for a group of girls from a small school in Northumberland.

"It was a very proud moment to see our captain Ellie Winter lead her country out in the stadium.

"However, the disappointment of the losses was soon replaced with delight at topping the fair play ranking and winning the much coveted Fair Play trophy, officially making them the nicest team in the world."

Ponteland qualified from around 3,000 schools to represent England in the 2018 version of the tournament, which ran last month, parallel to the 2019 event.

The competition finals, which featured eight girls' teams in two four-team groups, was played at the 40,000-seater RCDE Stadium.



Criminals exploiting the darker nights



By PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

A number of acquisitive crimes have been recorded in the last month, with burglaries to dwellings and commercial premises prevalent - electrical items and jewellery being among items stolen.

Offences have been reported during daylight hours and overnight, so with the onset of darker nights, it is important to remain vigilant and review crime prevention measures.

Advice is clear, and householders and business owners should:

- Keep windows and doors locked when out even if it's just for a few minutes. They should also lock doors when at home as offenders may still try to gain access
- Consider fitting an approved burglar alarm system
- Close curtains and use automatic timer switches to turn lights on when it goes dark, if going out for the evening. Timers should be set to go on and off at different times in different rooms
- Keep keys, including shed and car, in a place where they are not visible to anyone looking in. Keep them out of reach of windows and doors, and don't leave keys in the door
- Don't keep cheque books and cheque cards together, and don't write down PIN numbers
- Keep documents containing personal details such as bank statements and passports out of sight. If no longer needed, carefully dispose of or shred them
- Consider keeping expensive jewellery, house deeds and other important items in a home safe
- Even when at home, try not to leave accessible windows open at night

Further tips for securing property include using UV or indelible pens, postcode etching or chemically coded systems to mark property to make it difficult for thieves to sell on.

Householders can also register their valuables for free on the Immobilise website, which helps police identify the owners of recovered property thousands of times every day.

They can also photograph highly valuable items such as jewellery, paintings and antiques.

Door-to-door sales

Police regularly receive reports of people going door-to-door selling household goods, routinely targeting the elderly or vulnerable.

They are known as 'pedlars' or 'hawkers' and often claim to be ex-offenders on a rehabilitation scheme, but they can adopt aggressive sales tactics.

Persons engaged in selling this way require a valid certificate, and an application for a certificate is via the police – it allows

the pedlar to sell throughout the UK.

The trade carried out must be on foot and goods are to be carried, and there is a requirement to apply for a certificate annually.

Residents should always ask for valid ID and a pedlar's certificate, if appropriate.

Anyone with concerns over the authenticity of any person visiting an address should contact the police and provide a description, including clothing worn, any bag carried and their direction of travel.

Rural Crime Week

National Rural Crime Week took place last month, and Northumbria Police joined with other forces to conduct proactive wildlife and rural crime operations focusing on rural crime issues.

The initiative incorporated enforcement, prevention, and joint cross border patrols, as well as volunteer and partner participation.

A number of proactive operations took place to tackle rural crime, utilising partners and volunteers, and over 100 vehicles were stopped and checked.

Four vehicles were issued with prohibition notices via the DVSA, the Environment Agency dealt with six fishery offences, and four motorcycles without insurance were seized, during an off-road operation.

The week of action, which demonstrated the effectiveness of collaborative working, also saw a dog seized, pending investigation into Animal Welfare Act offences.

By involving a range of partners and individuals the police have effectively disrupted criminals targeting rural communities, and also gained positive feedback from the rural crime volunteers and partner agencies.

Community Speedwatch

Community Speedwatch Volunteers continue to dedicate their time out and about in and around Ponteland.

In the past four weeks 47 vehicles were recorded speeding, resulting in 42 warning letters sent to registered keepers.

A motorist has also been visited as a result of repeated speeding identified through the Speedwatch scheme.

It is worth noting there have been recent deployments where volunteers have not recorded any speeding vehicles.

Residents can provide information in relation to crime confidentially to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via the Crimestoppers website.

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

Homeowner anger as new property plan gets green light

Residents have hit out at what they claim is a lack of planning control after approval was granted for a new 13-home development on their doorsteps - despite objections.

They have condemned Northumberland County Council for its alleged inability or desire to block development at the sleepy but fast-growing hamlet of Medburn, on Ponteland's outskirts.

One described the upsurge in construction as a "bit of a nightmare" after councillors last month approved the latest planning bid.

It will see the properties built, subject to conditions, on land north of View Farm, The Avenue, even though official condemnation came from 12 householders and Ponteland Town Council.

In September, a further planning application was lodged for two properties of at least four bedrooms on a 1,460sq-m site north of The Avenue.

Medburn is understood to have seen around 150 new dwellings built in the past six years.

Residents say the area, including The

Avenue, a much potholed private road enclosed by around 60 homes, is unsuitable for development and does not have the infrastructure to cope.

One householder in The Avenue, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "I have given up on the planning system. There seems to be no accountability for the lack of safety due to excessive development and it all seems to be because we live on a private road.

"A planning consultant who came to view the area was surprised the council were continuing to allow development, as they felt the threshold had been met for too many houses. I'm beginning to question the capabilities of Northumberland County Council.

"We are now at the point where the sewers are at capacity and we are having the water company come out to unblock them a lot. Bit of a nightmare here."

Resident Margaret Chaytor added: "We are disappointed with council officers and officials who convened a public meeting at Dalton Hall in July but failed to offer

any constructive solutions.

"We don't know where to go from here. A residents' association simply won't work and some developers live on The Avenue and older residents are not prepared to pay again for road maintenance."

In its objection, Ponteland Town Council said the 13-home plan would constitute new housing development on greenfield land where only infill development on brownfield sites is permitted.

It added: "The construction of 13 more dwellings in addition to the approval of construction of approximately 152 new dwellings in Medburn since 2013, will have an overwhelming and adverse impact on what was once a small settlement of 21 dwellings."

A Northumberland County Council spokeswoman said: "The council considers each planning application against all relevant local and national planning policies, and takes into account all consultation responses received."

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Car parking misuse crackdown as retailer deploys cameras



Motorists warned not to overstay their two-hour welcome

Shoppers may check out with more than just groceries after upmarket retailer Waitrose installed cameras to monitor motorists using its Ponteland outlet.

They could be hit with a £95 fine if they are caught exceeding the car park's permitted free two-hour waiting period at any time of the day or night.

Bosses insist the allocated free parking time is ample for people to complete their shopping trip or visit other nearby businesses or shops.

And they defended the crackdown, saying it was necessary to curtail what they claim is the deliberate misuse of the site by motorists who ignore the parking restrictions.

A Waitrose & Partners spokesperson said: "We still offer two hours free parking - this has not changed.

"We have just changed how we monitor the car park as it has continued to be subject to people misusing it and exceeding the allotted time.

"We have therefore introduced the new system to improve the availability of spaces for our customers, while still providing enough time to use other shops and services."

Waitrose say the new ANPR camera system means the car park does not need to be patrolled.

The two-hour restriction applies around-the-clock and those who overstay their welcome will be issued with an automatic fine, generated and issued by parking firm Britannia.

One Ponteland resident said Waitrose needed to be clearer about its policy, adding: "The notice at the car park states that the car park closes 30 minutes after the store closes.

"I asked at the store whether this meant people parking there after the store has closed would get a ticket as many people use it to visit restaurants, pubs and other facilities.

"I was told that the cameras would always be on, but I wasn't convinced they were speaking with full knowledge."

Greys hightail it as red squirrels fight back in the battle for survival

It's a proposition that may once have sounded nuts.

But after almost a decade of decline, red squirrels are fighting back in the battle for territory in Darras Hall.

Watchers say their numbers are on the rise, with rival greys taking to their heels and leaving town.

They have witnessed an upsurge in much-loved reds, with around 45 counted in gardens and lanes this year - almost double that of the previous 12 months.

The animals have even extended their reach from the estate's periphery into more central areas.

At the same time, volunteers monitoring numbers of both breeds say greys, who bring devastation to the red population through disease, have declined.

Sally Hardy, co-founder of Ponteland Red Squirrels, said: "It is a very healthy sign that we have identified an increase in the number of reds and a drop in greys.



Red squirrels return in these images taken by residents

"We almost lost the reds about eight years ago after an outbreak of the pox brought in by grey squirrels, but now their numbers are again building up.

"There are nowhere near as many as there were, but they are increasing, which is a good thing.

"There are always greys coming in which we do remove, otherwise we wouldn't have reds in any number – they can't live together."

She added: "We would like to thank residents who encourage our reds and report red and grey squirrel sightings.

"Sightings are extremely important to us as they help to gauge the location, numbers and health of our population



of red squirrels and allow us to keep our area red.

"Ponteland and district is extremely lucky to boast a thriving population of red squirrels and this is all down to community involvement, along with the efforts of our volunteers."

Ponteland Red Squirrels, founded in 2005 as the North East's first monitor group, is backed by umbrella charity North East Red Squirrels, which supports red squirrel conservation across the region.

Residents can report sightings at pontelandredsquirrels@yahoo.co.uk or call Sally on 07878 061880 or Brad Jewell on 07949 212144.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

How a client's tears changed my life

By David Lamb, Lamb and Associates

I had been an independent financial adviser for 15 years and I was getting bored. Talking about pensions, life assurance, investments, funds, volatility and returns was not very exciting. And did it make any real difference to our clients' lives? Probably not.

Then, one very wet Monday evening, an existing client came into our office to discuss investing some money. I went through the normal process of an investment risk analysis, considering timescales for when the money would be required and drafting out a proposed investment portfolio.

I then asked the client a question about work and she burst into tears. I sympathetically asked her what the problem was and it turned out she was being bullied but, because of her financial commitments, she felt she was stuck and had to put up with it.

I asked her what the money she was proposing to invest was actually for

and she replied that it was for a rainy day. I told her it was pouring, and, for dramatic effect, I ripped up the piece of paper with the draft portfolio we had just constructed and threw it in the bin, along with £1,500 in commission.

We then did some basic cash flow projections to calculate how long she could survive without a job if she went into work the following day and resigned. We estimated about 18 months. She was confident she could find a new role in that time.

We then considered how much she would need to earn as a self-employed consultant to maintain her standard of living. Again, quite roughly, we estimated she should need to work about 2½ days a week. She left our office in a much better mood.

The following morning she phoned me and said she wanted to thank me for my advice. She said I had changed her life as I had taken all the stress away and she had decided against

resigning. She would instead continue to work, but more relaxed in the knowledge that if things got too bad she could just leave. Within a year she had a new job and life is now good.

Looking back I don't know if I really changed her life, but this experience certainly changed mine. For that is when I realised this was the type of work I really wanted to do - I just had to work out how to get paid for it!

A few months later I attended a course which introduced me to the software which enables us to provide life-changing advice. More than a decade on, our whole business is based around lifestyle financial planning and we have been able to help lots of clients achieve their desired lifestyle, ticking off wonderfully exciting bucket lists.

You couldn't pay me enough to be an ordinary independent financial adviser now.

Latest news from Ponteland Town Council

Grant applications

Councillors approved a grant of £250 for Sport Tynedale to assist towards the provision of grants to individuals to gain coaching qualifications and assistance to young people pursuing sporting excellence. It was also agreed to give a donation of £150 to Community Action Northumberland, which provides advice and support to communities throughout the county.

The lights go out

Members agreed to switch off recently installed lights at public toilets on Thornhill Road following several complaints from residents of the impact of their brightness. The matter has been investigated, and it was agreed to install two lower wattage lights with a reduced irradiation distance.

Annual Audit for 2018-19

The town council received the completed Annual Audit Return for 2018-19 from its auditors, PKF Littlejohn, which had no issues to raise. A copy of the return, including the auditor's report, has been displayed for the requisite 14 days on the council's website and notice boards.

Environment Working Party

The Working Party met on September 23rd, and the council approved a recommendation to have weed clearance work carried out at Oxbow Lake, in Ponteland Park.

Northumberland County Council report

Councillor Richard Dodd reported that the Examination Hearings in respect of the Northumberland Local Plan had commenced on October 8th at Morpeth Town Hall. He also said work was ongoing for a design for the Merton Way car park north. And he told how he had also attended an event relating to personal safety for councillors, which had been interesting, and he hoped that some of the items raised would be relevant to parish and town councillors. Councillor Veronica Jones reported on a consultation relating to oral health, and stated that Northumberland County Council had launched a staff wellbeing initiative for employees. She also said she had attended a recent event with MPs relating to problems they faced with safety issues such as abuse on social media.

This report is based on the minutes of the town council meeting, held on Wednesday, October 9.

New chapter for library as review of services gets set to launch

Council chiefs are to review Ponteland's library service as part of a county-wide survey to pinpoint what bookworms want most.

It comes less than three years after a shake-up led to the town branch's controversial switch to a new site and amid annual budget cuts of £100,000 to 2021.

The public consultation, expected to start in the coming weeks, aims to examine the book lending system with a view to reshaping its future direction in line with users' expectations.

And it comes as Northumberland County Council (NCC) confirmed a new library will be a feature of a £43m leisure and schools' development under construction in Ponteland.

Also included in the part-built multi-million-pound investment project is a new primary and secondary school and leisure centre.

NCC insists the review, which it is legally obliged to hold, is designed to identify the most valued aspects of the service and the barriers to library use.



Library review is about to start

Coun Cath Homer, cabinet member for Culture, Arts, Leisure and Tourism said: "Northumberland's library service has undergone many changes in recent years.

"However we feel that now is the time to look again at the service and make sure that it is serving the needs of our communities.

"We have been committed, since bringing the service back into the council in 2017, to building a stronger and more consistent service, but we now need to ensure that we understand what people value about their library and what they think we could do more of, or improve.

"This consultation will offer people the opportunity to have their say to help us design a library service that works for all.

"Even if you're not currently a regular user of the service we want to hear from you to understand what could be done to encourage more people to use their library."

Ponteland's library closed in November 2016, with the site being turned over to housing, prompting protests from some residents.

Services resumed a week later in the town's leisure centre, where they have remained ever since.

The consultation is expected to last up to three months, with initial findings coming early next year.

The public's views will be sought via an online survey, with paper copies also available at libraries, and drop-in sessions will also be held for residents to ask questions or provide verbal feedback.

Ponteland's is one of four planned new libraries in Northumberland, with others in Alnwick, Morpeth and Cramlington.

Housing policy under the spotlight as inspector opens public hearings

The future blueprint of planning in Northumberland has been laid bare before a government inspector in a scrutiny process that could have major implications for housing development in Ponteland.

Last month, three public examination sessions were heard by Susan Heywood, appointed to examine the county council's Local Plan - and two more will follow in early 2020.

The plan is a key long-term strategic document that includes the policies that will guide and determine planning applications over the next two decades.

It also details the scale and distribution of new development - several of which have recently been curtailed in and around Ponteland due to existing council policy - and includes land allocations and designations.

Council chiefs claim the plan will help grow and diversify the local economy and enable the creation of 15,000 new jobs in the county by 2036.

They admit it must be "robust" and insist the hearings are a milestone in delivering a plan which will ensure a strong and vibrant future for the county.

Ms Heywood, appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, must decide if the plan is 'sound' and complies with relevant legal requirements.

Four major planning applications for green belt development in and around Ponteland have failed since 2015, in part due to a change in policy by the council's incumbent Conservative leadership.

In September campaigners celebrated the withdrawal of plans for a 178-home development between

Callerton Lane and Willow Way.

It came weeks after a similarly controversial application was dropped for 2,000 homes on the 2,523-acres Dissington Estate, to the west of Ponteland.

In July 2015 a proposal for 280 homes at Birney Hill, near Ponteland, failed after it was rejected by then Labour-run Northumberland County Council.

And in June last year, a 400-home scheme at West Clickemin Farm, a 52-acre site between the A696 at Cheviot View and B6545 Rotary Way, was abandoned.

Council leader Peter Jackson said: "These hearings are the next milestone in delivering a local plan which will ensure a strong and vibrant future for Northumberland.

"Through the plan we will ensure that the county is a great place to live, work and visit, and that we truly address the future needs of our communities.

"It sends out a strong message that Northumberland has ambitious plans for growth, while also protecting everything that is special about the area."

Anyone can attend and listen to the hearings, but only those who made a formal objection to the plan can speak.

Those taking part include representatives of parish councils, development professionals, residents and other interested parties.

Details on the Local Plan are at www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan



Future of green belt under spotlight at Local Plan public examination

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Residents' committee chair speaks out over pathway concerns in this month's letters...

Road frontage issues considered

In response to recent letters regarding front boundary issues, I did in fact feature this in a major way at the last Annual General Meeting. In fact, I entitled the presentation 'The B Word' which referred to boundaries and not Brexit!

Back in 2017 the Committee made changes to Byelaw 13 in respect of road frontage boundaries in an attempt to clarify this contentious issue. Indeed, over the last two years, we have worked with developers, builders and owners to implement these changes.

In recent months, the Committee have intervened in at least three cases that I can remember where boundary walls were being built either without plans or not according to plans approved. The

boundaries concerned were brought into line with the new byelaws as a result of these interventions.

Further changes to the byelaws are currently in their final stages. When completed, these will be published on our website for owners' input and hopefully final approval. These changes should add greater clarity as to what is or isn't permitted with regard to all building matters and in particular, front boundary treatments on the estate.

I will send another letter to Pont News & Views in due course to alert residents to visit our website to see the byelaw changes I refer to.

Andrew Mate
Chairman, Darras Hall Estate Committee

December issue deadlines: Delivery of the December issue will start on Wednesday November 27th and be completed by Tuesday December 3rd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Wednesday November 13th. 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 November 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.

Race ace Chloe lasts the distance to win Great North event

A super speedy Ponteland teenager has left rivals in her slipstream by winning a prestigious running race at the first time of asking.

Talented Chloe Wellings, 17, came first in the Simplyhealth Great North Run 5K women's race, crossing the finishing line 45 seconds ahead of the runner-up.

Chloe, a second year A-level student at Ponteland High School, had competed in the Junior Great North Run every year since turning nine.

But having outgrown the event this year, she decided to enter the next step adult race, which took place on Saturday, September 7, the day before the Simplyhealth Great North Run.

The course ran from near the Swing Bridge in Newcastle to Gateshead, passing the Sage entertainments venue, and ending at Newcastle Quayside.

A delighted Chloe said: "I joined a running club when I was seven-years-old and I have been running ever since.

"I first ran the Junior Great North Run when I was eight, and have ran it every year until I was 16.

"As I was too old this year, I tried the GNR 5K Event which I really enjoyed. It was great to win the race."

Chloe, who lives at Newcastle Great Park, near Gosforth, has a long track record of running success.

She has raced for the North Eastern County Athletics Association at the Inter Counties Championships, and represented Northumberland Schools at the English Schools National Cross Country Championship finals.

Kieran McGrane, headteacher of Ponteland High School, said: "Chloe is an outstanding athlete and a wonderful student.

"She combines her dedication to her studies with a commitment to sporting excellence, which is a tall order whilst in sixth form.

"It is testament to Chloe's fantastic attitude and approach that she continues to impress."

Her coach, John Stephenson, added: "Well done Chloe, a well-deserved win. It was a great start to the weekend's events."

Chloe finished the race in 17m 5s, with Alex Sneddon in second place with a time of 17m 50s, and Hazelle Webster-Costella third, in 18m 16s.



All smiles for winner Chloe Wellings

What's on...

Ponteland Wildlife Group

On Tuesday November 5th, Louise Hislop will talk about 'Wild bees of Great Britain, an introduction to their lives and identification' at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road, priced £2 which includes refreshments. On Tuesday, December 3rd, Professor John Richards will talk about 'Flowers of the Dolomites' at the same time and place.

Kirkley WI

The group, which meets at 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Kirkley Hall, will start preparing for the festive season by making Christmas decorations on November 6th. Guests are always welcome, and further information is by emailing kirkleywi@hotmail.com

Ponteland Railway Films

Railway and Archive Films on a remembrance theme will be shown on Saturday November 9th in Ponteland Parish Hall, Thornhill Road, at 3pm and 7.30pm.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

From 2pm on Monday November 11th at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, David Faulkner will talk about 'Newcastles of the World'. New visitors are welcome to a club which promotes friendship and service, and members, aged 55 and over, are drawn from all walks of life. Further information is at <http://pontelandsgc.co.uk>

Ponteland Village WI

Motorbikes, royalty and cake are on the agenda when members meet at 7.30pm on Tuesday November 12th at St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road, in a joint get-together with Ponteland WI. Dave Routledge will talk about his journey 'Across Africa with The Two Princes', and there will be a competition for royal memorabilia. Visitors are welcome to a group which meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Information is on Facebook and at pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com

Women's Health Talk

From 12.30pm to 1.30pm on Wednesday November 13th at Ponteland Medical Centre. All welcome.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

The year's main meeting is at 2pm on Wednesday November 13th at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at which area demonstrator Ros Harrison will use the Christmas theme 'Under All the Wrapping'. Plants, produce, cakes, woodcraft, a tombola and a raffle are features. Visitors are welcome, and the £10 entry fee includes refreshments.

Ponteland Lions Club

The next business meeting is at 7.30pm on Wednesday November 13th in Merton Hall, Merton Road, and visitors are

welcome. Apologies have been made for the cancelation of its October charity fund bookstall, but two will be held, on Saturday November 2nd, and Saturday November 30th, at Waitrose, from 9am to 4pm. The club's annual charity fundraising Swimathon is on Saturday November 16th at Ponteland's sports centre, and teams are welcome to join. Information is on 0845 833 9913.

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 November 20th (enter via back door). Visit: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Ponteland Local History Society

At the meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday November 21st at St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road, Andy Griffin will talk about 'The Delavals: The rise and fall of an illustrious family'. Visitors are welcome and entry is £2.

Ponteland Rotary Christmas Market

This event takes place from 11am to 3pm on Sunday November 24th at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road.

Ponteland Civic Society

Maurice Holliday will speak about 'The Hearth in Horsley – Ancient Building to Arts Centre' at 7.30pm on Monday November 25th at Ponteland CIU Club, Merton Way. The 17th Century building has been converted to a community run multi-arts centre and cafe in the heart of Horsley, near Heddon on the Wall. Members and visitors are welcome, at £2.

Embroiderers Guild

Ponteland Branch

Members will meet between 2pm and 4pm on Monday November 25th at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, for Nue Christmas decoration with Mary Pitkethly. Kits are available but normal sewing kit and small hoop should be brought. Membership and access to workshops and meetings is open to all, whatever their level of experience. Membership or attending as a visitor is £4. There is no meeting in December. More information is from Penny Ford on (01670) 788278 or penelopeford636@btinternet.com.

Farm market

The Wilde Farm Market, featuring its own produce and that of other local businesses, takes place from noon to 2pm on Sunday December 1st at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road.

Ponteland Ladies' Choir

This friendly group of singers with a young enthusiastic conductor meets at Ponteland United Reformed Church, The Broadway, Darras Hall, on Mondays from 7pm to 9pm in term time, and no audition is needed. Ex-choir members are asked to return music they may have retained, either by contacting Nina on (0191) 6709055 or Chris on (01661) 852130, or by calling into the church between 7pm and 9pm on Mondays or to a choir member.

Ponteland Village WI

The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road. Find it on Facebook, Ponteland Village WI, or email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com

Ponteland Methodist Church

Services on Sundays are held at 10am, which include children's activities, and at 6.30pm. An open door drop-in café, with drinks, scones and cakes, is from 2pm to 5pm on Mondays, and a Thursday toddlers club is held. Church members enjoy fellowship meetings, walking groups, carpet bowls, prayer and fairtrade groups, and host the Girls Brigade and the Boys Brigade. More information is from Ann on (01661) 824347 or anncooperx@gmail.com

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 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 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.

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.

Tuesday Bridge Club

New members are invited to join the Tuesday Bridge Club which runs each week until the end of April. The club has moved to Merton Hall, Merton Road, Ponteland. Information from Sandy on 07935 237732.

Whistling Sheep Ceilidh Band

The band meets on alternate Mondays after school at Ponteland High School. Information is at www.whistlingssheep.co.uk. The band is available to play at events.

Magical moment as drama group wins award for stunning stage production

A spellbinding dramatisation of infamous witch trials over 300 years ago in the fledgling United States has landed a Ponteland theatre company a prestigious award.

Ponteland Repertory Society (PRS) won the best drama category at the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) North Awards for its production of US playwright Arthur Miller's lauded *The Crucible*.

His tale is a part-fictionalised account of the Salem witch trials which took place in the Massachusetts Bay Colony - now part of the US east coast - in 1692 and 1693.

The PRS's spring 2019 reworking, directed by Carole Davies, featured stand-out

performances by Jules Stevenson Warrender as Elizabeth Proctor and Jonny Woollett as John Proctor.

Two of the play's central characters, the real life John Proctor was a 60-year-old farmer executed for witchcraft, and his pregnant wife Elizabeth was also convicted but later freed and pardoned.

Lesley Eltringham, PRS's publicity officer, described the win as "an outstanding achievement", adding: "This is a complex and difficult play but the whole company challenged it with enthusiasm, determination and energy.

"Difficult lines took hours to learn and rehearsals were long but paid off with a brilliant result from our local amateur actors and production team.



Top award for drama group

"Carole Davies directed with her usual skill and experience. There are too many hard-working individuals involved in the production to mention them all.

"However, Jules as Elizabeth Proctor and Jonny as John Proctor deserve a special mention for their superb performances, provoking real tears in some of the audience."

The NODA North Awards evening, held at the Grand

Hotel, Gosforth Park, Gosforth, comes ahead of the PRS's next production, the musical *Alice*.

It runs from Wednesday, December 4, to Saturday, December 7, at Ponteland Memorial Hall, in Darras Road, with performances at 7pm, and a 2pm matinée on the Saturday.

Tickets for the family show are available online at pontelandrep.co.uk and at Ponteland Hardware, in Merton Way.

Service throws loving light thrown on darkest of times

Ponteland residents can remember a loved one at a special pre-Christmas service being organised by a North East hospice.

They can attend St Mary's Church, in Thornhill Road, at 3pm on Sunday, December 8, as part of Tynedale Hospice at Home's Light Up a Life initiative.

It aims to help people reflect on friends and relatives who have died, and allows them to donate to support the Hexham-based hospice's work.

The service is expected to include carol singing, readings, a time of reflection and the lighting of candles in memory of those who have passed away.

It is one of five which will place over two days, with others at Prudhoe, Allendale, Haltwhistle and Hexham.

Tynedale Hospice at Home was founded in 1993 to provide nursing care, transport and pre and post bereavement support to children, adults and families in Tynedale, West Northumberland and Ponteland.

Its palliative nursing care is provided in the home where the patient and their family can be surrounded by familiar comforts and be cared for in a place of their choosing.

The hospice's hospital transport service offers a door-to-door service to and from appointments and is provided entirely by volunteer drivers who use their own cars.

More information is at tynedalehospice.com

PONTELAND REPERTORY SOCIETY PRESENTS

Alice

Music and lyrics by JAMES LEISY and CARL EBERHARD
Book by JAMES LEISY
Arrangements by JACK LAMBERT

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December 4th, 5th, 6th at 7pm
December 7th at 2pm, 7pm
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www.mtiusa.co.uk

Proppies

Ponteland Schools and Leisure

Kier Regional Building Scotland & North East



Dear Resident,

We continue to progress well with our Phase 1 programme and have just completed week 49 of our programmed 85 weeks for the construction of the Schools, Leisure Centre and Community Crescent Hub. We are at the completion stage of the new Fire Station and hand over to NCC and the Northumberland Fire Service during November.

During September we reached a significant milestone with the completion of the structural steel frame and precast concrete slab installations. This was the culmination of 5 months of work to erect over 1,600 tonnes of steel and several hundred crane lifts to install the precast concrete slab sections. To celebrate this milestone, we held a Golden Bolt event involving all stakeholders including, NCC Client Team, Ponteland High School, Ponteland Primary School, and Active Northumberland. We also had members of Northumberland County Council and Ponteland Town Councils present to join in the celebration of this important milestone.

Despite the wet weather through September and October, progress has continued well with roofs and external envelopes – windows, cladding and brick work – progressing to make the buildings weathertight.

The installation of roofs has progressed well with the final roof, to the new Pool Hall, now nearing completion. Installation of the cladding panels has progressed to the Primary School and Secondary School Halls, as well as the Games Hall to the Leisure Centre. The cladders will progressively complete the insulation and top sheets as they work in a northerly direction along the Crescent building.

The internal areas have progressed well during September, with significant progress to the internal partitions and mechanical & electrical works. Rooms have advanced to all levels of the Secondary School and have reached a point where the joiners and decorators have been able to progress their works during September.

Internal fit-out works are progressing well to both the Secondary and Primary Schools, and the buildings are starting to take on their final form. These works will continue for the remainder of the project, with the various areas progressing to close-out and completion through to hand-over in summer 2020.

What works you will see in the next 4 weeks?

- Complete main Roofing Works to all areas.
- Scaffold wrap to the Secondary School elevations.
- Continue to progress Brickwork to the Secondary School.
- Continue to progress M&E installations to the Secondary School.
- Complete Windows to the Primary School.
- Complete Internal Partition Works to the Primary School.
- Continue to progress M&E installations to the Primary School.
- Complete internal Block Work to the South Crescent back of house areas.
- Continue to progress partition works to all Crescent areas.
- Progress Pool Slab Construction to the North Crescent.
- Complete External Works to the Fire Station.
- Works to commence for the cleaning out of the pond behind the existing fire station.
- Works to commence for the external works to the Primary School.
- Works to progress for the archaeological dig in the area of the new sports pitches.

Watch Points through October

- Daily traffic movements in and out of the site
- HGV deliveries with concrete, cladding materials, M&E services materials, bricks, blocks, metal studs and drywall boards, and curtain walling materials
- Installation of cladding and curtain walling systems
- Crane operations

CSR & Project Quick Facts

Resource levels are growing on a daily basis, and the site currently has in excess of 150nr operatives and 18nr members on a daily basis. Resources are forecast to peak at over 250nr operatives on a daily basis, and over 20 members of staff.



If you have any concerns or queries regarding the works, please feel free to contact us:



Roddy Graham
Project Leader
07849 098786
ksne.ponteland@kier.co.uk



Andy Todhunter
Operations Lead
07773 243081

Pitch perfect as choir hits all the right notes

A renowned choir delivered a performance to remember - and helped to raise hundreds of pounds for charity - from a top class show in Ponteland.

Voices of Hope, the 2016 winner of the BBC's National Choir of the Year competition, sang to perfection in a concert at St Mary's Church, in Thornhill Road.

It was a homecoming for some members of the choir, who live in Ponteland or its surrounding towns and villages.

The concert, on Saturday, September 14, raised £1,000 for Guide Dogs for the Blind and £400 for Hearing Dogs.

June Atkinson, who has helped to organise the event, said: "Our concert was a phenomenal success.

"Voices of Hope gave an uplifting and exciting performance, with a programme of both new and well-known songs.

"It was truly a privilege to have them singing in our ancient church, whose acoustic quality always assures us of beautiful music.

"People are so generous in supporting charities and giving their time, skills and energy to enable events like this to happen."

Voices of Hope has become nationally and internationally



Voices of Hope enthrall their audience

renowned since its founding in 2011 by its musical director, Simon Davies-Fidler.

The choir regularly broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and has performed on BBC 4.

Last year, it performed the Pankhurst Anthem, which celebrates 100 years of women's suffrage, at the Sage Gateshead.

June added: "Each guide dog, from being bred as a puppy until it retires at the age of 11 or 12, with all of its training, its veterinary care, food and insurance, costs £65,000.

"Our concert was well worth all the effort, knowing that these dogs change the lives of sight-impaired and deaf people in a wonderful way."

Golfer in the swing for money-raising charity challenge

A day-long downpour proved no handicap to a Ponteland golfer's bid to complete a 60-hole charity challenge.

Michael Bayley, 60, overcame the elements to complete the rain-hit 13-hour quest – raising £1,700 for a North East hospice.

The health and safety adviser was joined by a team of supporters in an event which started in dry weather at 6.50am but ended amid a deluge at exactly 8pm in late August.

He completed three full rounds and six extra holes – the 60 tally signifying his recent landmark birthday – in 295 shots, or 55 over par.

Aside from the bad weather, he admits the event's worst downside was losing his prized first ball on the 49th hole at Ponteland Golf Club.

But he made up for the disappointment by clinching his only birdie four holes later, and in raising money for Hospice Care North Northumberland, based in Alnwick.



Golfer Michael Bayley, sixth left, with fundraising supporters

Michael said: "It started off dry but by 10.30am it was starting to drizzle – and then it rained and rained.

"We were all completely drenched, it turned into an experience that none of those who took part are likely to forget, but it was very enjoyable.

"I completed the course at 55 over par but considering the weather, that wasn't at all bad.

"I'd definitely do the event again – it was lot of fun and we raised money for good causes – but next time, I would hope the weather would be better."

The dad-of-two strode onto the 6,500 yard-long course with his brother-in-law Andrew Morgan, and those to join him at various stages included his son Elliot, 23.

In a touching tribute to his efforts, everyone who helped him around the course joined him to play the final six holes.

As well as raising money for the hospice, funds will also go to the Bobby Robson Foundation via the club's Captain's Charity.

Donations can still be made at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/michaelbayley

Golden moment as final bolts are driven into new development project

VIP guests found themselves in the frame when a major milestone was reached in the development of a £43m learning and leisure project in Ponteland.

Scheme partners were on hand to ceremonially tighten the final bolts - known as 'golden bolts' - in the steel support structure of an initiative that includes the creation of two schools and leisure facilities.

Bosses from developer Kier were joined by guests from Northumberland County Council, leisure charity Active Northumberland, Ponteland Primary School and Ponteland High School.

Kier's engineers say the completion of the structural steel frame, which comes soon after the project's planned mid-point, is a major milestone.

And they confirmed the installation of the precast concrete components was also complete and that of structural slabs was well underway.

Phil McDowell, operations director of Kier Regional Building North-East England, said: "We are delighted to be marking this major milestone in the delivery of these fantastic facilities for the community in Ponteland.

"We are working closely with our project partners to ensure these facilities open as planned in Summer 2020 and benefit the community and young people for years to come."

Cllr Wayne Daley, Northumberland County Council's deputy leader and cabinet member for children's services, added: "It was great to visit the site for this significant milestone in what is one of the largest developments ever delivered by the council.

"It will provide two fantastic new schools plus state-of-the-art leisure and community and sports facilities which I am sure the people from Ponteland and surrounding communities will love.

"The council is proud of what is one of its largest ever capital programmes with schemes to boost the county's economy, improve education prospects for all and create new infrastructure for the future, with around £142m being spent on schools in a three-year period."

Mark Tweedie, chief executive of Active Northumberland, which will manage the leisure centre, said: "This iconic new facility is key to ensuring Active Northumberland achieves its new vision and strategy to transform leisure services to bring an increased focus on participation for all and to improve health and wellbeing."

The development features a 1,600-pupil secondary school and 420-pupil primary school, a 52-place nursery, a leisure centre with a six lane swimming pool, a spa, gym, soft play area, library and café.



Cllr Wayne Daley and pupil Ethan Smith, with Kier's team and project supporters



Pupil Ethan Smith holds the final 'golden bolt'

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African adventure puts teenager on awareness mission

A Ponteland teenager is calling on young people to consider volunteering overseas after taking part in a 10-week project fighting poverty in Uganda.

Lucy Denyer, 19, of Rowan Drive, journeyed to the African state with international development organisation Restless Development.

Her adventure trip was part of the UK government-funded International Citizen Service (ICS) programme, where she worked alongside young volunteers from Uganda and the UK.

To immerse in community life and to better understand the challenges citizens there face, Lucy lived with a local host family in Kyerima, in Kayunga district.

She also helped teach a range of topics, including giving advice around teenage pregnancy.

Lucy said: "Lots of young people in Uganda have only had limited sex education, and there is little to no access to free contraceptives, especially in rural communities due to limited health services.



Lucy Denyer, centre, with fellow volunteer Kiera and team leader Leonard

"This can result in the young women dropping out of school because of pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

"The unemployment rate of young people in Uganda is also high, which is why we also focused on skills and livelihood training.

"I had an amazing time. Living with my host family was definitely one of the best parts, it was incredible how welcoming the people in our village were, we were treated as family."

And Lucy, who plans to study medicine at university, added: "This was a great way to learn about the culture and

ensured we have made long-term friendships.

"The international citizenship service is something that I didn't know a lot about before I applied.

"I wish to increase awareness of this programme so more young people in the North East can have access to this opportunity."

Felicity Morgan, Director of ICS, said: "It's really inspiring to hear about the fantastic work Lucy did on placement.

"We're incredibly proud that UK aid is supporting young Brits to bring about positive change in some of the world's poorest communities."

Youngsters branch out to enjoy outdoor fun day

A teddy bears' picnic was all that was missing when youngsters from Ponteland High School went down to the woods to enjoy an activities day.

The Year 7 pupils embarked on an exciting start to the current term when they visited Plessey Woods Country Park with their form tutors, pastoral manager and an external services provider.

They worked on teambuilding exercises and activities designed to help them make new friends, improve confidence and get to know each other better.

Activities included synchronised plank stepping, figuring out how to undo human knots, a task using balls and pipes and orienteering.

Staff say they were highly impressed with the positive attitude and kindness the learners showed each other.

Activity leader Tom Hopper was full of praise for the students, saying: "As a year group, they were unfailingly polite, pleasant, co-operative, friendly and well behaved – as well as being incredibly motivated.

"Additionally, I must have heard the words please and thank you literally hundreds of times. They were a credit to their school.

"Students arrived ready and willing to join in and, after a day packed with new challenges, left tired but happy to have taken part in a fantastic day.

"Well done to all Year 7 students for making such a fantastic impression and what a great way to start their first year in Ponteland High School."



Outdoor fun for James Dixon, Ethan McAlpine, Jack Jachuck and Nic Forrest



Picnic time for Avy Doods, Tilley Lamb, Poppy Bell, Ava Cothill and Anna Bell.

Festivities begin with market-leading event

Sleigh bells may ring in the start of the festive season when Santa makes an appearance at Ponteland's fifth annual Christmas Market later this month.

Organisers say he will be the star attraction for children at the fundraising event, which runs from 11am to 3pm on Sunday, November 24, in the town's Memorial Hall, Darras Road.

There will also be fun attractions for adults, with an estimated 60 stallholders pitching their wares to visitors.

Other promised highlights are live music by local schoolchildren and the Ponteland Wind Band, with sounds coordinated by host and MC, Pete Brown.

Last year's market raised £4,700 for good causes, including £3,500 for Daft as a Brush, a charity which provides free transport to patients receiving cancer treatment.

The Ponteland Rotary Club, which is organising the market, said the Gosforth-based organisation would again be the beneficiary of visitors' generosity.

President Alan Hall added: "We were overwhelmed by the interest and support

given by people in Ponteland to last year's Christmas Market.

"It enabled us to give thousands of pounds to our major charity partner, Daft as a Brush. We are delighted to again be working with them as our main charity."

Lead organiser Janet Cusworth added: "We are expecting around 60 stallholders at this event. There will be a wonderful atmosphere in the hall, with lots of gift ideas from the stands and displays.

"I have also heard a rumour that Santa might be there in his grotto. With food and hot drinks available, we think the event is an important part of the build-up to Christmas."

Weekly walks to keep residents fit and well this autumn

People in Ponteland are being urged to walk their way to fitness – whatever the weather.

They can take part in a programme of free weekly Health Walks, which are supported by the town's GP practices.

Lasting for between 60 and 90 minutes, they take place on good quality footpaths and require no specialist equipment other than sunscreen, stout walking shoes or trainers, and a warm jacket.

The walks, which start at 10.30am on Tuesdays at Ponteland Leisure Centre, take place come rain or shine and will continue over the winter, guaranteeing regular exercise.

Volunteer leader Gordon Allan said studies had shown regular walking keeps participants fitter, healthier and happier – and said the treks also allowed for socialising and friendship.

He added: "Walking is one of the simplest and best ways to improve both your physical and mental health.

"I live on my own and enjoy



Further information is from West Northumberland Health Walks co-ordinator Lorraine Oliver on **01670 622368** or loliver@activenorthumberland.org.uk or from Gordon on **07936 135469**

getting out for a walk, particularly over the winter, the fresh air, companionship and exercise can really lift my mood.

"Don't be shy, come along and join in, our local volunteers will give you a

warm and friendly welcome.

"We cater for all abilities and the volunteers make sure everyone is safe and nobody gets left behind".

Gordon would also like to hear from people who would

like to support the walks by becoming a volunteer, for which no experience is required, with a day's training provided.

Assistance dogs only are welcome.

Speed limit concerns as dark nights hit home

Council chiefs in Ponteland are urging drivers to go slow this winter – and for pedestrians to take extra care when out and about.

They fear many motorists are unaware that a 20mph speed limit is in force in some parts of Ponteland, including near schools.

And they are asking householders to keep pedestrian areas outside their properties free from obstacles and ensure trees on their land do not impede walker visibility.

Coun Christine Greenwell, chair of Ponteland Town Council's Highways Working Party, said: "The dark evenings and inevitable poor weather ahead mean that drivers should take extra care, be aware of pedestrians, road conditions and speed limits.

"Drivers may not be aware that roads near Ponteland's schools are all 20mph. And we are stressing that the Thornhill Road area, from both entrances on North Road, has a 20mph speed limit. This includes all the roads on the estate.

"Many drivers do not seem to realise that the whole estate has had this 20mph protection for some years to ensure the safety of pedestrians and road users."

Coun Greenwell also confirmed concerns that light from new streetlamps, designed to reduce light pollution, are often affected by poorly-maintained trees on private property.

She added: "Trees should not prevent the light shining down on to paths and roads. Residents are responsible for cutting back these trees.

"If the council has to carry out this work on behalf of householders, it will incur an extra cost to them. Safety is our priority.

"Householders may not be aware that they are responsible for ensuring that hedges and trees do not cause problems on the pavement or road. And we want people to ensure that these are cut back before the winter brings icy paths and pavements. Good visibility is vital."

Coun Greenwell said that if householders had concerns about whether their hedging or trees could be a problem for others, they could contact Ponteland Town Council offices where staff can arrange for a contractor to visit their property and, if necessary, do the required work. Any contract work would be at the householder's expense.

A centenary birthday to celebrate

A Royal message of congratulations has helped a Ponteland lady celebrate a marvellous birthday milestone.

Wendy Porter received a telegram from the Queen when she reached her 100th year.

She is from one of the longest living families in Ponteland – ancestor Jane Anne Bates gave support to the building of Milbourne Church, which remains a thriving place of worship.

Wendy has the distinction of being one of the last of the family to be brought up in Milbourne.

The mum-of-two has witnessed many ups and downs during her long life.

She lost two uncles in World War One and her favourite brother, Bates Mortimer, died in World War Two



Centenarian Wendy Porter

while fighting in the Far East. Wendy did not go to school but had tutors to help her education, and later volunteered for work in an infirmary.

She was married to the late Henry, with whom she had a son and a daughter, Lucinda, who lives next door to Wendy in Runnymede Road, Ponteland.

Ride on time as cycling leaflet hits the road

Ponteland residents are being urged to 'get on their bikes' following the launch of a new family cycling ride leaflet.

Its publication comes hot on the heels of the Tour of Britain recently coming to Northumberland.

It highlights 10 family rides across the county and is available in Tourist Information Centres, libraries and Northumberland County Council's (NCC) Customer Service Centres.

The leaflet has been developed by NCC in partnership with Cycle Northumberland, Northumberland National Park, the Forestry Commission, Cycle Generation and the National Trust.

Routes have been specially chosen to include places where bike hire is available and to show the variety of cycling routes available.

They are Breamish Valley, Salmon Cycle, Hexham, Wagon Wheels, Tyne Riverside Park, Prudhoe, the country parks of Gallagher Park, Bedlington, and Queen Elizabeth II Country Park, Ashington, and coast and Castles from Druridge to Alnmouth.

Also included is Ford and Etal, Kielder Water and Forest Park, the Dragon Trail at Wallington, Berwick to Cocklawburn Beach, and Blyth to St Mary's Lighthouse.

Each route also includes useful information including nearby parking, toilets and places to eat.

Cath Homer, NCC's Cabinet member for Culture, Arts, Leisure and Tourism, said: "The Tour of Britain coming to Northumberland has been a fantastic opportunity for the county to promote and demonstrate the wealth and variety of cycle routes available.

"We want there to be a lasting legacy from this major sporting event which helps to encourage people to get out and get active.

"This leaflet will make it easier for families to choose the right route for them and to explore our breathtaking coast and countryside on two wheels."

The leaflet can also be downloaded at www.discoverourland.co.uk/discover-cycling



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Grace worked closely with them on their design criteria, taking into consideration Rob's need for ample wine storage and Laura's desire for somewhere to house her longed-for electric piano, all the while making sure the kitchen was fully functioning as a space for cooking and entertaining.

They love the flexibility their new home affords them, and delight in having friends and family stay with them comfortably thanks to the renovations.



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