

# pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Health warnings alert  
as virus fears grow

Crufts winner Jellybean  
is a pedigree pooch

New pub plan could be  
the toast of the town

## Little Teddy's perfect pick-me-up to help environment



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# Tricks of the trade help Jellybean be named top dog

**A Jack Russell Terrier from Ponteland with a taste for liver cake has shown his pedigree by being named a top dog at world-famous Crufts.**

Jellybean has set tongues and tails wagging by winning the prized Good Citizen Dog Class at the internationally-renowned annual competition for pooches.

The talented three-year old was judged best among three other Jack Russells for the way he walked and presented himself when asked to step up to the mark.

Owner Sue McCabe, 45, admits to being surprised he did so well, having earlier failed to land a top three place in a separate category but with the same judge.

And she confessed to having a tasty trick up her sleeve that boosted Jellybean's chances of success - pieces of dog-friendly liver cake.

Sue said: "I was a little taken aback that he won due to the fact he had not done so well earlier on in the competition.

"For his winning category, he was in the ring for about 25 minutes, walking with his competitors and then being placed on a table to have his size and bite checked.

"To prove his pedigree, he had to be measured in a certain way, such as the size of his bite and that of his ribcage.

"He's an intelligent dog but I'm not sure how much, if anything, he understood of his success at this competition. To him, it's a fun day out.

"I carried around with me a fun bag of treats that included liver cake. Lots of owners treat their dogs to liver cake during competitions; it seems to work."

Jellybean, who is Sue's first pedigree show dog, began learning the tricks of the performance trade when he was just 11 weeks old.

He reached Crufts after qualifying from the Border Union Championship Show, held at Kelso in the Scottish Borders,

last June.

Sue is hoping for repeat Crufts success next year and is already making plans to get Jellybean back into qualification competitions.





# Agency on defensive to safeguard town

## A bid to protect Ponteland from future flooding has sprung into action.

Environment chiefs hope to turn the tide of risk by improving defences as part of the existing Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The newly-started add-on initiative aims to ensure better protection for more than 250 residential properties.

Work will largely be on private land at the rear of Lane Nurseries and the Auberne property, between Callerton Lane and the footbridge at Ponteland Memorial Hall.

A small amount is also proposed on land adjacent to the hall, which is owned by Ponteland Town Council.

To be effective the government's Environment Agency, which is carrying out the scheme, must fell 40 trees in the path of the defence.

Their removal was identified in two public consultations, and it is being done in arrangement with all landowners.

While admitting the move is

"regrettable", the agency insists 200 trees will be planted to compensate for their loss.

Suggestions are now being welcomed about where in Ponteland the trees should be planted.

Leila Huntington, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Manager for the North East, said: "With climate change, the risk of flooding will increase and flood defences play an important part in reducing flood risk and helping communities to be more resilient.

"The essential replacement of flood defences in Ponteland will ensure they continue to protect 250 homes from flooding.

"We have a policy for replanting five trees for every one tree that is removed. This means that in Ponteland we will be replanting over 200 trees and we're keen for local people to suggest where they would like the saplings to go.

"This could be in school grounds or on the site of a popular public green space."

Ponteland resident and flood warden Andy Anderson said: "Keeping the



The Environment Agency's Colin Hall, left, with flood warden Andy Anderson

flood defences up-to-date is essential - especially with the change in our current climate conditions.

"This is why the Flood Alleviation Scheme is vital for the local community - helping to protect us and provide peace of mind."

Ideas on trees planning positions can be sent to [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) using the title 'Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme - TREES'.

Further details about the overall defence scheme is at <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/north-east/ponteland-flood-alleviation-scheme-information>.



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# Coffee grower Hugo speaks same Fairtrade language

An enthusiastic coffee farmer swapped Peru for Ponteland to prove he is full of beans when it comes to promoting Fairtrade produce.

Hugo Guerrero, 32, made the 6,000 mile trip to Tyneside from the South America country's mountainous Piura region to talk about his family business.

He was greeted by over 80 locals, including Deputy Mayor Christine Greenwell, for an event organised by Ponteland Fairtrade Town Steering Group and held at St Matthew's Church, in West Road.

Through an interpreter, Spanish-speaking Hugo told how he had been trained in new farming methods to sustainably produce organic coffee and how the increased price paid for his Fairtrade coffee had improved lives in his community.

Steve Helm, chairman of Ponteland Fairtrade Town Steering Group, said: "Those present were deeply affected by the authenticity of his presentation and his personal witness of the value of Fairtrade accreditation in improving



Hugo Guerrero, second left, with Steve Helm, left, Deputy Mayor Christine Greenwell, Chrysi, from the Fairtrade Foundation, and interpreter Beatrice.



Hugo on his tour of Ponteland

people's lives simply by being paid a fair price for their hard work in producing high quality coffee.

"He thanked the people of Ponteland for buying Fairtrade coffee from the supermarkets and from church Traidcraft stalls.

"Hugo was taken on a quick tour of

Ponteland to see the river and the Pele Tower, before he returned to London with his Fairtrade Foundation helpers."

Hugo is part of one of the more successful coffee farming families in Piura, which is known for the cultivation of quality, organic produce.

He helps to farm 15 hectares, compared to the more common smallholdings of around three hectares.

Without access to education and training, farmers are poorly equipped to find solutions to climate change, but Hugo is already improving the situation.

He uses part of his father's farm to experiment with different crops, grafting disease resistant plants with the quality Arabica that fetches a higher price at market.

The Ponteland steering group's Big Brew event, held on Saturday, February 29, and featuring cakes, bric-a-brac stalls, a tombola and a Traidcraft stall, made a profit of £817.

The money will go to Traidcraft Exchange, its Fairtrade development charity, which helps farmers gain Fairtrade accreditation and work their way out of poverty.

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# Be careful to spread only kindness

By Alan Varley, Mayor of Ponteland



**The only subject of conversation at present seems to be COVID-19 (coronavirus), and it is no surprise that everyone has concerns.**

The official advice appears to be changing by the minute. But what we do know is that we have entered uncharted waters and the direct and indirect effects are widespread and will be with us for months to come.

I want to assure everyone that the staff and councillors at Ponteland Town Council are trying hard to find out as much information as they can and while the council offices will probably have to close, as long as staff are well they will be available to answer your queries by email or phone during office hours. We are also constantly updating our website and Facebook page to bring up-to-date information and help.

As a council, we are concerned to support local shops and other businesses and if there are other ways that you feel Ponteland Town Council can help, please get in touch. Northumberland County Council also has daily updated information on its website at [northumberland.gov.uk/Care/Health.aspx#coronavirus](http://northumberland.gov.uk/Care/Health.aspx#coronavirus)

It is important to remember that many younger people have underlying health issues and that not all disabilities are visible. We must all do our bit to help to stop the spread of coronavirus. Sensible

precautions are clearly crucial, such as regular hand washing and avoiding physical contact.

Exercise is important for the mind as well as the body. I am concerned that those not going out and about should try to exercise at home. There are a variety of armchair exercises and even walking up and downstairs a few times can make a difference.

A major issue is the effect on people who feel trapped in their homes. Loneliness and isolation are going to have a major effect on many. Please don't assume that your neighbours are fine. Make a phone call, drop a friendly note through the door, offer to help. And don't be afraid to ask for help.

There is a downloadable "Isolation Help Postcard" available on the Town Council website for those wanting to offer help to neighbours and friends. Please remember that not everyone has access to the internet to find out about self-help groups and advice.

A friendly voice on the phone can make a big difference, so I'm asking people to pick up the phone and make a call, especially to those living alone or who clearly aren't leaving their homes. If you can offer help with shopping, posting a letter, walking a dog or anything else, that's great, but just a short call would be appreciated by most people.

And don't just think about older people, anyone could be affected. Let's come together without personal contact. Some of our councillors are putting letters through doors asking people to help where they can. I urge you to do something. And do it now.

Let's hope the crisis is over sooner than the Government and medical experts are predicting. But in the meantime, staying safe is crucial, so be careful that you spread only kindness.

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# Health alert as coronavirus spreads

## Health chiefs have issued Ponteland residents with crucial latest advice to stay healthy amid the global COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak.

Top priorities include avoiding unnecessary contact with others and keeping indoors, if possible – and self-isolating if main symptoms appear.

These are a new and continuous cough and/or a high temperature, with older people and those with chronic medical conditions urged to be extra cautious.

The guidance comes as several local events, including this month's seventh annual Ponteland Beer Festival, were cancelled amid fears of the disease's spread.

The numbers will be much higher by the time you read this but as we went to print there had been 5,683 confirmed cases, with 135 of these having fully recovered but with 283 sadly having died.

Public Health England advises anyone living alone who has symptoms, however mild, to stay at home for seven days from the start of their illness.

And people living in a household where one member shows either of these symptoms should self-isolate for 14 days.

Other key advice is:

- Stopping non-essential contact and all unnecessary travel, and avoiding social gatherings.
- Shielding the over 70s, pregnant women and those in high risk clinical groups as a precautionary measure. These groups must take extra care to exclude non-essential contact for at least 12 weeks.

To minimise risk of infection further, Public Health England also advises people to:

- Wash their hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing their nose, or after being in public areas where other people are doing so.
- Reduce the spread of germs when coughing or sneezing by covering their mouth and nose with a tissue, or a sleeve – but not hands – if no tissue is available, and to throw the tissue away immediately. People should then wash their hands or use a hand sanitising gel.
- Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Residents are also advised to check on elderly or vulnerable family, friends and neighbours and to use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service in the first instance.

Public Health England says the best way for most people to manage COVID-19 is self-isolation and to use over-the-counter medicines.

Further information is at:

- [nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](https://nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)
- [gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response](https://gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response)
- [111.nhs.uk/covid-19](https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19)

Businesses should visit:

- [gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-announcesadditional-support-to-protect-businesses](https://gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-announcesadditional-support-to-protect-businesses)

## Events cancelled over virus fears

Several events in Ponteland have fallen foul of the coronavirus outbreak, the most notable being the annual Ponteland Beer Festival, which was planned over three days from Friday, April 24.

Organisers of the event, due to have been held at Ponteland Rugby Club and which last year attracted a record 3,500 ale lovers, say their priority is the wellbeing of attendees and hope to reschedule for later in the year.

Northumberland County Council has also cancelled all events and activities at its libraries until further notice.

And a two-day song and dance production by the Ponteland-based Jill Errington School of Dance and Drama, planned for Newcastle's People's Theatre on the weekend of Saturday, April 25, has also been cancelled.

Titled Her Story and based on how women have positively changed society, it is now expected to take place on Friday, October 16 and Saturday, October 17.

Other confirmed cancellations are:

- Ponteland Senior Gents Club's meetings on Monday, April 20, and Monday, May 11
- Ponteland Civic Society's meeting on Monday, April 27
- U3A Ponteland, the Ponteland Community Partnership and Ponteland Local History Society have cancelled meetings until further notice.



**NHS**

HM Government

## Coronavirus

### Isolate your household

### Stay at home

If you or anyone in your household has a high temperature or a new and continuous cough – even if it's mild

- ✓ Everyone in your household must stay at home for 14 days and keep away from others.
- ✗ DO NOT go to your GP or hospital.
- ✓ Go to [NHS.UK](https://nhs.uk) to check your symptoms and follow the specialist medical advice. Only call NHS 111 if you can't get online or your symptoms worsen.
- ✓ Protect older people and those with existing health conditions by avoiding contact.

Find out how to isolate your household at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus)

**CORONAVIRUS**  
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# Vigilance needed to beat poachers

By PC Phil Oliver, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

**Residents in rural areas around Ponteland should be watchful, following recent reports of poaching and hare coursing with dogs.**

The tell-tale signs of poaching activity include the appearance of suspicious vehicles – usually 4x4 or estate vehicles – lamps being shone across fields and fresh mud tracks leaving fields.

Useful information we require when we are contacted by the public about this issue includes:

- A full description of suspects including their clothing
- The number of dogs and their breed
- Vehicle registration numbers, and the make, model, colour and any distinguishing features
- The direction suspects are traveling
- The location, including a grid reference, GPS co-ordinates, a What3Words reference or local landmarks.

However, residents should always be mindful about their personal safety when reporting suspicious vehicles that may be involved in poaching. Anyone seeking further guidance on poaching issues should contact PC Lee Davison, the Wildlife Crime Officer, based within the neighbourhood team.

## Drugs patrols target youths

We have been conducting patrols in the area around Ponteland Park and Callerton Lane, after recent reports of drug use between youths. Several stop searches of suspects have taken place and we will continue to patrol, both in uniform and in plain clothes, to deter such behaviour.

Anyone found with illicit drugs, regardless of age, will be dealt with robustly. Residents are asked to continue to report any suspicious activity.

## Community engagements

Officers from the East Tynedale Neighbourhood Policing Team will be at the following community locations:

- Sunday April 5, from 4pm to 5pm: Co-op store in Broadway
- Thursday April 9, from 9am to 10am: Ponteland Leisure Centre
- Wednesday April 15, from 5.30pm to 6.30pm: Ponteland Leisure Centre
- Wednesday April 22, from 11am to noon: Matfen Village Store
- Thurs April 23, from 6pm to 7pm: Belsay Village Shop

The public can attend these meetings to discuss any policing issues in their neighbourhood.



# Three cheers-to-one as micropub gets the go-ahead!

**Ponteland is to get its first micropub - after objectors failed to make a new business enterprise fall flat.**

They were outnumbered three-to-one in correspondence with council planning chiefs by tipplers who backed Michael Barnes' application.

Northumberland County Council (NCC) also agreed the scheme was a tasty proposal – and have given it the official go ahead.

Mr Barnes, 54, from Bedlington, is now set to open his corner outlet at 10 West Road, the site of a former interior design business.

One full-time staff member and two part-time employees will operate its 48sq-m of floor space.

The entrepreneur, who founded his Pont Tap Ltd company last year, could not be contacted for comment.

However, he wrote to the council in February to try to dispel what he claimed was a misconception from some objectors to his plan.

Mr Barnes feared town

residents believed he wanted to brew his own beer at the site as a micro-brewery rather than sell other makers' pints through his micropub.

In a letter, he said: "Some comments have been made regards to the possible odours arising from the property.

"Can I point out that we intend to operate as a 'Micro Pub' and not as some people are wrongly assuming a 'Micro Brewery'.

"I think it is very important that people understand the difference. Our business will be a 'clean' operation with no odours or smells being emitted from the premises.

"I hope this clears up any misconceptions that any member of the public or otherwise may have had."

Several residents objected to the scheme on the grounds the pub is in an unsuitable location - but 21 people backed the business, and NCC agreed to its go-ahead.

Micropubs typically shun all forms of electronic entertainment and sell a small range of mainly independently-brewed cask ales.



# Teddy is ready for clean-up campaign

A Ponteland youngster is proving that being eco-friendly is child's play – by downing his toys and grabbing a litter picker to clean up his neighbourhood.

Little Teddy Burn-Davies is going out and about with mum Eloise Davies for 30 minutes once a week after school to clear away rubbish and mess.

In just three sessions, four-year-old Teddy, of The Lairage, has filled three bags of discarded trash.

Eloise, 41, a teacher at Darras Hall Primary School, in Middle Drive, Ponteland, says he became determined to help protect the environment after learning about it in the classroom.

She said: "He's a right little eco warrior, a bit of an environmental geek but for all the right reasons. He's quite obsessed with it.

"There's a teacher in his reception class who has been very proactive about recycling and Teddy is enthusiastic too.

"We spotted some rubbish when out and about one day and he was straight out clearing it away.

"We've been back to the same spot twice and visited another location, taking away three bags of rubbish so far. The areas we have tackled look much better already.

"We also like to go to Blyth beach. When we do, we take away with us five things that we can put in a bin.

"It is very important his generation of children know about the



Teddy Burn-Davies at work with mum Eloise Davies



Photos by Barry Pells

environment, they will be the ones next in line to tackle it."

Teddy and his pals are also being encouraged to protect the environment at Darras Hall Primary School through a project to create a raised flowerbed from plastic that cannot otherwise be recycled.

The plastic is instead being used to make eco bricks, like those created from drinks bottles packed with items including crisp packets, and then used for small-scale construction projects.

## ADVERTISING FEATURE

### New name, new website but business as usual!

*By David Lamb, Lamb and Associates*

**We believe that lifestyle financial planning should be all about our clients; their health, relationships, time, personal fulfilment, career, fun and recreation, financial independence and their money. Our service should be all about them.**

This month's article, however, is different. It's all about us!

After almost 28 years (all of which we have been based in Ponteland) we are changing our name to Lamb Financial.

As part of this process, we will have a new website [lambfinancial.co.uk](http://lambfinancial.co.uk). This will have a simple version of our new web-based tool called ScoreMy, which should be available separately in the summer.

ScoreMy will help you measure your progress with your financial planning.

Financial planning is a journey, and this will help you plot how far you have come. It will also help you measure the value of the service your financial adviser or planner is providing. If you get higher scores, hopefully you are getting value for money. If any of your scores dip, you could quickly identify areas that need attention.

Also available on the website will be a library of my blogs including my thoughts on the current state of investments. (I thought about writing about what is happening in the markets this month, but things are happening so quickly it could be out of date before the magazine is published!)

As part of the new Lamb Financial, we will also have updated systems and processes, new fee options

(a comprehensive fee menu as an alternative to an hourly rate so our clients are completely clear as to what we charge). This is all designed to help us be seen as being one of the leading lifestyle financial planning firms in the North-East.

In accordance with government guidelines, all our staff will be working from home and will continue to do so until the guidance changes. All staff will have full access to emails and our other operating systems. If you need to contact us please do so as normal via email or call the office telephone number. We have a telephone answering service which will take a message and pass it on to us. We are continuing with client meetings either via telephone or Skype.



# Your letters

The Editor  
Pont News & Views



Hedge woes and the Council Tax rise feature in this month's letters...

## Signage at school an 'act of landscape vandalism'

**When Northumberland County Council published proposals to build a new primary school in Darras Hall, we were advised that the hedgerow that had enclosed the site for some fifty years was to be protected and retained.**

In the event, the first thing the builders did was to rip out a 100m length of mature hawthorn along the Middle Drive frontage.

When we complained about this act of landscape vandalism we were told that the hedge would be replaced. So far, the replacement effort has failed to impress. Less than half the damaged frontage has been planted with a single row of young saplings. They do little or nothing to screen from view the motley assembly of bin enclosures, bike sheds and parked vehicles.

To add insult to injury the council has seen fit to bedeck the site perimeter with an array of signage. I think most people would have concluded that the new building was a primary school and that it was located on Darras Hall. However, the building's designers clearly felt there was a need to avoid any uncertainty and proclaimed the fact in lettering, large enough to be visible from passing aircraft, on the building's façade, not once but twice.

Despite the scale and prominence of this information the authority has sought to reinforce the message by erecting a further six signs, again informing us that this is Darras Hall Primary School, on placards dotted around the site boundary either attached to separate metal frames, hung on the wire fencing or attached to the building.

Similarly, the double yellow road markings, I would have thought, provide a pretty clear indication that the parking of vehicles is prohibited along this frontage, but again the council has felt the need to point up this restriction with a further assembly of placards.

All in all there are more than twenty separate notices of one kind or another distributed around this site, seriously detracting from the school's overall image. More than half of these could be done away with and most of the rest grouped together on a decently designed notice board.

Premises designed to house an educational facility need to demonstrate a degree of cultural awareness and refinement, not be decked out like some cut-price supermarket.

**John Hague**

High View, Ponteland

**May issue deadlines:** Delivery of the May issue will start on Thursday April 30th and be completed by Wednesday May 6th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Thursday April 16th. If you are aware of any missed properties please contact the editor at [pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk](mailto:pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk) or call (0191) 5191306. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the May issue.

**PLEASE NOTE:** due to the COVID-19 social distancing measures being applied by the Government it may not be possible to distribute the May issue door to door. If this is the case an online only version will be produced. Please visit [ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views](http://ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views) for updates.

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.

## Appeal for better services to match Council Tax increase

**When are we going to see value for money in return for the present high Council Tax paid by all residents in Ponteland before further increases?**

Was it necessary to spend so much on new schools when very little was wrong with the present ones, plus the new sports centre?

Some of the savings on these projects could have gone into new projects they have in mind. And larger schools will encourage children to come in from the Newcastle area. We are subsidising, and the intake will cause further road congestion.

I have written to the council on several occasions, to ask when we are going to see money being spent on the disgraceful state of roads in Ponteland. I name Middle Drive and pathways and the new school, down to the junction B6323 at the Ponteland and Throckley junction, and on down to the centre of Ponteland.

Other roads in urgent need of repair are Eastern Way and pathways and the road to the doctors' surgery on the industrial estate, as well as North Road, Thornhill Road and others. May I further add the many cul-de-sacs are without street lights and pathways, which causes concern regarding safety and security?

Let us have roads and pathways swept again after so many years without, and we need more parking spaces in all areas of Ponteland.

Over these last few years, I and many more residents have seen the lowering of all standards of care and attention to detail in Ponteland. We ask for the council to look into better care and attention to all services for residents.

**James Glenville**

The Wynde, Ponteland

*Note from Ponteland Mayor Alan Varley: "Mr Glenville will, I hope, be delighted to note that the Ponteland Town Council precept for 2020/21 shows an increase of 0% - financial prudence at its best!"*

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# Date set for hall car park fees

## Charging for the Memorial Hall car park is now scheduled to start on May 1st.

Chairman of the Hall, Robin Ramsay, said "We very much regret the need to charge for parking at the hall but the car park is very expensive to maintain and this is the only way we can raise the funds for upkeep.

"The tariffs will be as low as possible, with 15 minutes free and up to 1 hour for 20p and four hours for £1. Long term parking will be more expensive. Signs will be displayed at the hall with details of the charges and how to pay."

The best way to pay parking fees is using the Good2go (parkgood2go.com) website. You can register with a debit or credit card and then fees will be charged automatically each time you use the car park. You'll receive a monthly statement via email.

Otherwise you can use a mobile phone. It saves time on the day if you download an app from paybyphone.com. There's a transaction charge of 20p each time you park. You'll get a text message to remind you before your time runs out and you can extend the time.

For security reasons there won't be any facilities to pay with cash but there are other options the hall may be able to help with.



Mr Ramsay added: "There is serious danger to the future of the hall because our finances are not sufficient to continue to maintain the car park together with other costs. Other sources of funds for car park maintenance aren't available. The hall is now widely used by all parts of the community and its loss would be a major blow."

Hall staff and volunteers will hold drop-in sessions to deal with queries. These will be in the afternoon and evening and a timetable will be available on the notice boards, the hall website [pontelandmemorialhall.com](http://pontelandmemorialhall.com) and Ponteland Council website [ponteland-tc.gov.uk](http://ponteland-tc.gov.uk).

*The normal What's on guide has been withdrawn as most meetings and events have been cancelled due to COVID-19.*

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# When hearing is believing

*An Easter message from The Revd Captain Paul Allison, Vicar of Ponteland*

**'Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark...'**

For St John, that's more than a comment on the time of day. It's dark, too, in the heart of Mary, enclosed in grief and desolation. I believe that no-one is ready to encounter Easter until they have spent time in dark places. Mary is alone, and through her tears she notices a figure she thinks is the gardener. Why doesn't she see Jesus standing close to her? We share her grief and the suspense that Jesus is there, the Risen, Living Lord. We long for her to see Jesus and to assuage her fears.

We cannot judge Mary too harshly for not recognising Jesus, for many today do not recognize the Risen Lord who stands so close to them. The limits of our expectations and the modesty of our hopes can blind us. Mary, I feel, speaks for those who live with loss, grief and doubt. She shows that the personal search for truth is worth going on with, that in the end we will meet our loving, lost Lord. St John says that we are able to know Jesus because we are known to him already. We will know the voice of the one who knows us and calls us by name.

When Mary meets the Risen Lord Jesus on the first Easter morning, it is only when she hears him speak her name, Mary, that she recognises him. She turns to greet her Risen Lord and says Rabboni, which means 'teacher'. Instantly she is re-connected with her lost Lord by hearing the single word, Mary. That is the moment of her own resurrection. Her sorrow is turned to joy; she comes to life again.

Mary lives because Jesus lives, and when we, too, hear the voice of Jesus, like Mary did, we come alive, quickened and exhilarated by the surprise of recognition and acceptance. But for those of us who already hear God's call and know His life within – what next? Is this a tender and reassuring presence that we want to keep hold of, all to ourselves like Mary? Jesus tells us, as he did her, do not to cling to him. He says to us 'Don't cling to the past'.

Resurrection happened on the first day of the week and St John links it to the first day of creation. It is a new beginning. Easter doesn't return us to the past – it opens up a new future. Following Jesus means losing him the moment we think we have captured



him, only to discover him anew – always ahead, going before us, and we, his modern-day disciples and followers, are called to be caught up in the reckless love and hope that works and witnesses for liberation and reconciliation in the dark and fearful places of our world.

We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song. May all see Christ in us and come to know the hope of Glory that is in our Risen Lord. For God will use our fragile, uncertain, doubtful yet enduring faith to renew the world.

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## Church services cancelled

**Easter church services in Ponteland have been cancelled in response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.**

In a message to parishioners, the Vicar of Ponteland Reverend Captain Paul T Allison said: "The Church of England has made the very difficult decision to suspend all public worship with immediate effect in order to help control the spread of COVID-19.

"All regular services at St Mary's and Holy Saviour have therefore ceased. St Mary's Church will continue to be open daily for private prayer and reflection at this time of great challenge and uncertainty for our community and nation.

"Canon Christine and I will continue to meet regularly, as we always have, for

daily prayer. When you hear the periodic short tolling of the church bells know we are holding you all in prayer.

The Church of England is to make available resources to enable us to enrich and sustain our faith. I am hoping to be able to share these through the parish website and Facebook page.

"Instead of the weekly notice sheet I aim to post the Sunday readings and some reflections/prayers on the parish website. I hope also to create a link for daily morning and evening prayer and compline as well as other resources to link us together in our shared faith.

"This is a very concerning and difficult time for us all. Be assured of my prayers. I am already planning with Canon Christine and the church wardens how we can sustain and develop a new way of being 'Church' during this time when we can't meet together for shared worship.

"The clergy anticipate hearing further from the Bishop of Newcastle in the coming days how we can best exercise safely our pastoral ministry. In the meantime please feel free to contact me by telephone or email if I can be of any assistance.

"Please be assured of my prayers and concern for you all at this difficult time. In Christ."

Rev Jona Sewell of Ponteland Methodist Church added: "It is with great regret that all worship services within the Methodist Church are currently suspended due to COVID-19.

"However, regular updates and worship videos will be uploaded to the internet. To find us please go to YouTube and search 'Newcastle West Methodist Circuit' - this will take you to our page and latest videos. Or find us on Facebook."

## Grant applications

The council agreed grant applications of £1,000 to Friends of St Mary's Church to fund display materials, £720 to Ponteland Community Partnership to help pay for running costs, £292.50 to Ponteland Community Singers to assist with room rental costs, and £437.50 to the Great North Air Ambulance towards the cost of providing an automatic chest compressions system.

## Recycling event proposed

Following attendance by town councillors at the West Sleekburn Recycling Centre in 2019, a proposal was considered to hold an event in Ponteland where Northumberland County Council (NCC) officers would provide a presentation to residents regarding recycling. NCC is keen to get the message across to the public about waste management and good recycling practice.

It was agreed to arrange an event at Ponteland Memorial Hall at a date to be arranged this year. If this proves successful, a further event may be arranged.

The council also asked for information about costs of providing a recycling wheel, produced by NCC, for distribution to each household via Pont News & Views. This will be reported to the next meeting.

## Highways Working Party

Information had been provided to the meeting held on February 14, about the swan neck street lighting on Main Street. Some lights were not working, and it was reported there was a fault with the lamps themselves, which are under warranty and need to be replaced.

The Chairman advised that two speed indicator signs were to be installed in Prestwick. A further one would be installed on Thornhill Road by being moved from Callerton Lane.

## Poster competition

The Environment Working Party agreed to hold a poster competition to advertise a community litter pick taking place on Saturday,

May 16. The winning poster will be used to advertise the event (which may be cancelled due to COVID-19 - monitor website at [ponteland-tc.gov.uk](http://ponteland-tc.gov.uk)).

## Northumberland County Council report

Cllr Richard Dodd reported that approval had been given to carry out improvements to the Merton North car park, some of the funds coming from his small schemes allowance which he had retained for this purpose.

Work was progressing well on the new school and leisure complex and it was likely that public open days would be held prior to opening later in the year.

A two-year budget totalling £1.6bn has been agreed by NCC.

A document dealing with security of councillors had been issued by NCC, and Cllr Dodd agreed to provide copies to the town council.

This report is based on the minutes of the town council meeting on March 11.



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# Ponteland Schools and Leisure

## Notification of Road Reconstruction Works to Callerton Lane



Dear Resident & Local Business,

As noted in the recent edition of the Kier Construction newsletter published in the March 2020 edition of the Pont News & Views, road reconstruction works are to proceed to Callerton Lane as part of the overall development plan for the new Schools and Leisure Development on Callerton Lane.

It is anticipated that works will commence early April 2020 and will take up to 30 weeks to complete. During this period, significant carriageway reconstruction works are required to accommodate the vehicles for the new development. There will be disruption during this work with traffic management systems will be in operation to allow the road to remain open in one direction of travel, from the village centre in a southerly direction along Callerton Lane towards the Darras Hall Roundabout.

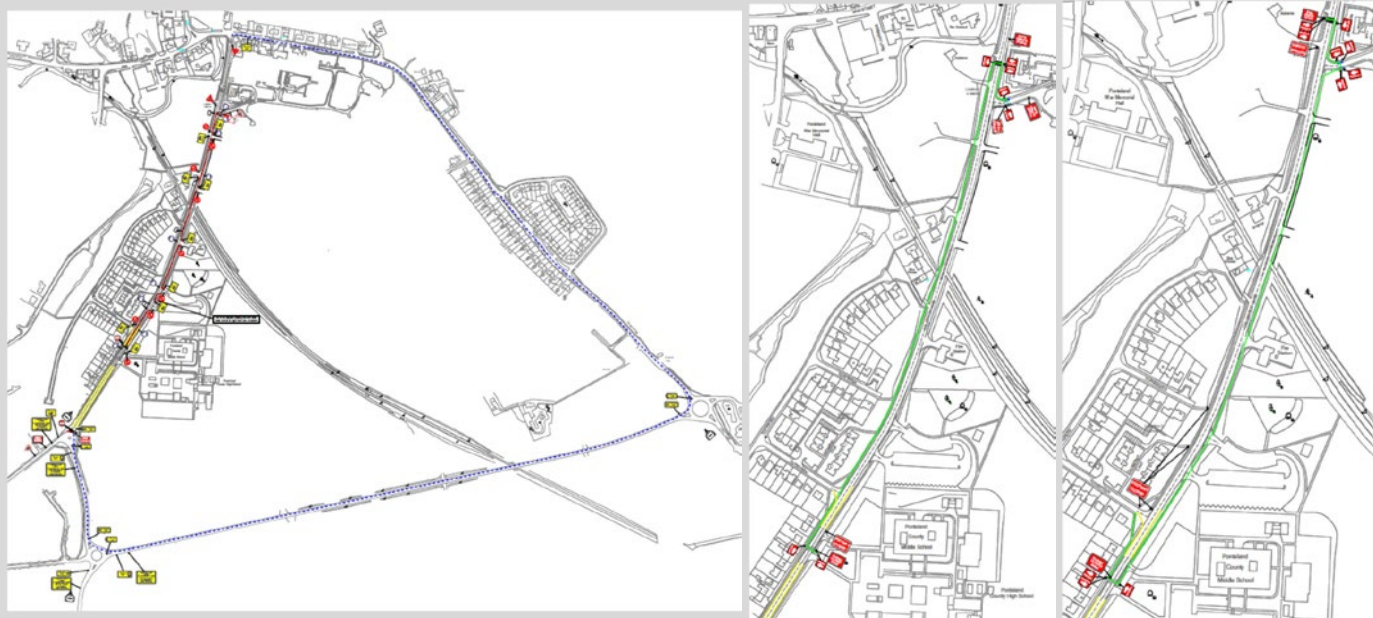
Throughout the period, the only access from the southern end of Callerton Lane from the Darras Hall roundabout will be for the provision of access for residents only on the southern end of Callerton Lane and Dunsgreen. Access to all other areas will be as follows:

- Mayfair Gardens – 2-way access will be maintained from the junction at The Diamond Inn for access for residents and users of the existing Leisure Centre.
- Ponteland Middle School – one-way access will be provided from the junction at The Diamond Inn to the School Car Park, then on exit a **LEFT TURN ONLY** will be permitted out of the car park to continue south along Callerton Lane to the Darras Hall roundabout to exit Callerton Lane.
- Ponteland High School – one-way access will be provided from the junction at The Diamond Inn to the School Car Park, then on exit a **LEFT TURN ONLY** will be permitted out of the car park to continue south along Callerton Lane to the Darras Hall roundabout to exit Callerton Lane.

As Callerton Lane will be reduced to one-way traffic between Mayfair Gardens and Dunsgreen, parking will not be permitted on Callerton Lane road or verges, to ensure the smooth flow of traffic in the north-south direction, especially during peak times at school drop-off and pick-up.

The agreed traffic management plans, together with the agreed diversion routes – vehicular and pedestrian – are shown on the plans below. The Vehicle Diversion Route is shown on the left image; the Phase 1 Pedestrian Diversion on the centre image; and, the Phase 2 Pedestrian Diversion route on the right image. The one-way system will be operational for the duration of the road reconstruction works. It is intended that works will progress on the southbound carriageway first – Diamond Inn to Darras Hall Roundabout – then switched over to the northbound carriageway – Darras Hall Roundabout to Diamond Inn – however all traffic will be required to follow the agreed one-way system, with the only exceptions being the those residents requiring access to properties at the south end of Callerton Lane and residents of Dunsgreen, residents, who can access from the Darras Hall Roundabout; and, residents of Mayfair Gardens and users of the Leisure Centre car park, who can access from The Diamond Inn junction.

Whilst there is disruption during these works, the road reconstruction is critical to the long term operation of the new Community Campus. Unfortunately, these works are necessary, and we appreciate your patience while we progress with the completion of your new development.



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

Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
NE61 2EF  
Tel.: 0345 600 6400



# Ponteland Schools and Leisure

## Kier Regional Building Scotland & North East



### Dear Resident,

We have continued to make good progress over the past month, having just completed week 70 of our programmed 85 weeks period for the construction of the Schools, Leisure Centre and Community Crescent Hub. Works are also progressing well to the external areas as well as the buildings.

During March we have made good progress with the finishes to the Primary and Secondary teaching wings, as well as progressing works to the Crescent areas. Good progress has been made within the Pool Hall with the installation of the tank structure for the 25m pool, and the installation of the track for the Learner Pool. M&E services have also progressed well to all areas with works now focused on the Crescent areas and Pool Hall.

We have commenced our sequential close-out process with the Client team to the teaching wings and will be continuing this process through to the completion of the Project for all areas.

Works are progressing well, and the Project is on track for hand-over in summer 2020 as planned.

#### What works you will see in the next 4 weeks?

- Complete M&E installations to the Secondary School.
- Substantially Complete the internal fit-out to the Secondary School
- Continue to progress external works to the Secondary School.
- Complete render panels to the Secondary School.
- Complete removal of scaffolds to all elevations of the Primary School.
- Complete M&E installations to the Primary School.
- Complete the internal fit-out to the Primary School
- Continue to progress external works to the Primary School.
- Substantially complete partition works to all Crescent areas.
- Continue to progress M&E installations to all Crescent areas.
- Complete final finishes to Curtain Walling installations to all areas.
- Complete the installation of swimming pool tanks to the Pool Hall.
- Continue to progress installation of all services to the Pool Hall.
- Progress testing and commissioning of roof top mechanical equipment.
- Continue to progress installation of M&E services to the Spa and Gym areas.
- Progress specialist Spa installation works.
- Continue to progress works to the bridgeway.
- Progress with the construction of the Southern Car Park.

As reported last month, there are road reconstruction works that are required to Callerton Lane to support the new development. These works are scheduled to commence end of March/beginning of April and are explained in more detail on the following sheet. This provides greater detail on traffic and pedestrian restrictions/diversions as well as programme durations and the outline for the completion of the works. Discussions are still ongoing with NCC as to whether these works are to be completed by NCC Highways or Kier Construction.

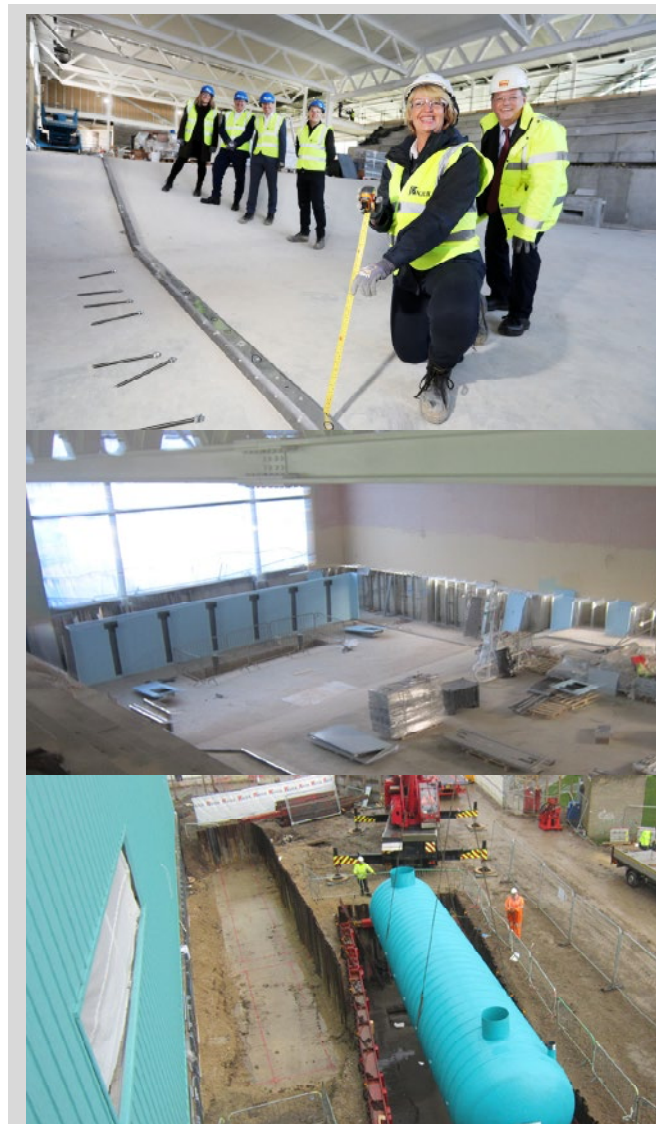
#### Watch Points through April

- Daily traffic movements in and out of the site
- HGV deliveries
- Progression of works to the Bridgeway.
- Progression of required roadworks to Callerton Lane.

#### CSR & Project Quick Facts

During March we have had visits from Northumberland County Council and Ponteland Town Council elected members to review the ongoing works. We also had a milestone visit from Active Northumberland and Cllr. Peter Jackson and Cllr. Cath Homer to mark the start of the installation of the swimming pools.

Unfortunately we had to cancel the Open Doors week at the instruction of the Open Doors Organising Committee due to the risks associated with the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Open Doors committee has not announced any alternative dates have been announced due to the severity of the outbreak. Whilst this is a disappointment, we are sure you will understand and agree that public safety is paramount in light of recent reporting of the virus.



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



**Roddy Graham**  
Project Leader  
07849 098786



**Andy Todhunter**  
Operations Lead  
07773 243081

[ksne.ponteland@kier.co.uk](mailto:ksne.ponteland@kier.co.uk)







## COVID-19 Response

We would like to assure you that we are **doing everything we can** to offer a comprehensive service, with alterations to suit you, over the coming weeks.

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