

# pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Pandemic threatens new  
£43m school and leisure  
scheme launch date

.....  
Tributes as Normandy  
veteran turns 100

.....  
Building society boost  
for Air Ambulance crews

## Volunteers mobilise to help the vulnerable during lockdown



## Thinking of Extending your Home?



**PJC ARCHITECTURE LTD**  
 Contact us for your *free* 20 minute Lockdown Consultation! We'd be pleased to help you!  
 Tel: 0191 2140022 email: enquiries@pjc-architecture.co.uk

## Thinking of retiring? Unsure of your options?

**Speak to  
 a pensions  
 expert**



independent  
 financial  
 advisers

For your free initial consultation  
 give us a call on **(01661) 821110** or  
 email us at **enquiries@cfs-ifa.co.uk**

Office 2a, Horton Park, Berwick Hill Road, Seaton Burn,  
 Newcastle upon Tyne, NE13 6BU

*Serving the Ponteland community since 1996.*

**Kip  
 McGrath™**  
 EDUCATIONCENTRES

**ONLINE  
 TUTORING  
 NOW AVAILABLE**



Primary - Secondary • Qualified Teachers • Personalised Learning

✓English ✓Maths ✓Reading ✓Spelling ✓Comprehension

Book a free online assessment today

**Kip McGrath - Newburn and Westerhope**

**Tel: 0191 4355 274**

**kipmcgrath.co.uk/newburn-and-westerhope**

*Belsay Woodland Burials Now Available*



**STRETTLÉ**



**FOR A COMPLETE  
 FUNERAL & MEMORIAL  
 SERVICE**

- Funeral arrangements for cremation or burial - Religious or Humanist from £2650 inclusive
- 'Pre-need' funeral and memorial plans from £2899
- Advice on grave purchase - traditional or woodland
- Memorials in stone, marble, slate and granite - traditional or bespoke from £390 inclusive
- Memorial renovation, additional inscriptions etc.
- Statuary, vases, plaques and 'tomblets' - the remarkable miniature home memorial
- Memorial stone valuation/insurance
- Sympathy and funeral floral tributes

**Office, Showroom and Chapels of Rest at:**

**15 West Road, Ponteland Tel: 01661 822015**

**450 West Road, Newcastle Tel: 0191 274 2471**

**24HR ENQUIRY LINE**

**(0191) 252 8222**



# Centenary tributes to Normandy veteran

## A Normandy veteran described as an “inspirational” figure in the North-East has celebrated his 100th birthday.

As both a serving officer during World War Two and as an engineer, John Gillespie OBE enjoyed an illustrious career with many outstanding achievements.

Born and educated to degree level in civil engineering in Glasgow, John joined Sir Robert McAlpine in 1939 on war work on the Clyde and was a fire watcher during the Clydebank Blitz.

In 1942, he volunteered for the Royal Engineers to take a greater involvement in the war effort. Following officer training in Aldershot, he worked on the construction of a number of army installations and trained for Force PLUTO (Pipe Line Underwater Transportation of Oil).

On June 17 1944 he boarded the Empire Miss in Portsmouth Harbour and set sail for France, landing on Gold Beach Arromanche, between Omaha and Juno beaches, on the first anniversary of his wedding to his wife Ellen.

Petrol pipelines were established from an offshore mooring to the beach, where John’s team built 1,200-ton steel petrol storage tanks under camouflage nets, supplying the Allied Forces.

The team then took the journey through Boulogne, where they joined with other PLUTO pipelines, and on through France, Belgium, Holland and into Germany, braving minefields and other perils along the way.

Following this, John’s company travelled on to the shores of the Baltic and beyond, capturing German rocket scientists who went on to play a major role in developing the US space programme. Only the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima stopped him from moving on to serve in Japan.

His bravery was recognised in 2015 when he was presented with the Legion d’honneur at a ceremony at Durham Cathedral, and last year he travelled to France to join in the celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

John’s post-war career saw him later become Managing Director of the Port of Tyne. Other notable accomplishments include inspiring the refurbishment of the Thomas Telford Atlas, an 83-page copper-plated illustrated record of the first President of the Institution of Civil Engineers’ achievements in civil

engineering in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

A planned birthday party in Ponteland to celebrate John’s colourful life had to be scaled down due to the lockdown. But tributes poured in nonetheless.

Michael Taylor, ICE North East’s Heritage Panel Chairman, said: “A 100th birthday of a man who seems to have done everything! D Day landing, PLUTO, silversmith, CEO at the Port of Tyne - the list goes on and on! Indeed, his memoirs extend to half a million words. A life to be celebrated.”

Praising “an extraordinary life and an inestimable contribution to both the profession and your country”, Sean Harris, Director of ICE Membership, added: “You joined the Institution in 1948, but a few years earlier had joined the Allies on GOLD beach as part of Operation OVERLORD, the D-Day landings and the prelude to liberating Europe and making it a better, fairer and safer place for all.

“Throughout your civil engineering career you have continued making society a better place, becoming a Fellow of ICE in 1973 and an Officer (Chevalier) of the Légion d’honneur, France’s highest honour, some years later. It is therefore with enormous respect, gratitude and affection that we wish you the happiest of birthdays.”



# Air ambulance crew flying in style thanks to Darras branch's fundraising

Helicopter crews with a lifesaving charity have taken delivery of essential new safety equipment thanks to a four-figure grant obtained through its local Newcastle Building Society branch.

The Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS) provides a full helicopter emergency medical service which covers 8,000 square miles across the North East and Cumbria, swiftly bringing pre-hospital care to those in urgent need.

Three new flight suits required to ensure the crew is effectively protected against the elements and to increase their visibility even in low light have been funded by a £1,058 grant from the Society's Darras Hall branch, close to its forward operating base at Newcastle International Airport.

Each flight suit, which costs over £350, comprises a flight top, flight trousers and knee and elbow pads, designed for use in all weathers.

The funding has been provided by the Society's Community Fund at the Community Foundation, which was set up to offer grants to charities and community groups located in or around the communities served by the Society's branch network, and put forward for support by its customers.

GNAAS has two staffed bases, at Langwathby near Penrith and Teesside International Airport near Darlington, and operates three helicopters, each of which has an onboard team consisting of a pilot, a specialist pre-hospital doctor and a paramedic.



All suited up: Dr Kate Allen is pictured with paramedic Ian Grey and one of the GNAAS helicopters.

The service cost £5.3m last year alone, and receives no statutory funding, meaning it relies entirely on donations, fundraising and grants.

Andy Mawson, director of operations at the Great North Air Ambulance Service, says: "These specialist flight suits are absolutely essential equipment for our crew members. They are made of the same material that a Formula One driver would wear, making them not only very safe but also hard wearing.

"We're very grateful to the Society for helping us continue our work through this donation. Transporting patients at 190mph saves time, but what really saves lives is our critical care team and these flight suits are crucial to their work."



## PONTELAND COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

OPENING SEPTEMBER 2020 - NURSERY THROUGH TO Y6

Ponteland Community Middle School is the highest placed Northumberland school in the 2019 KS2 SATs and in the top 1% of ALL primary and middle schools in the whole country.

PCPS is a feeder school for Ponteland High for families resident in the local catchment area.

Wraparound care, before and after-school clubs, specialist facilities and dedicated staff available for your child.



### Interested in a place for your child?

Contact the School:

**01661 824853 | [admin@ponteland.academy](mailto:admin@ponteland.academy)**

Or contact Northumberland School Admissions:

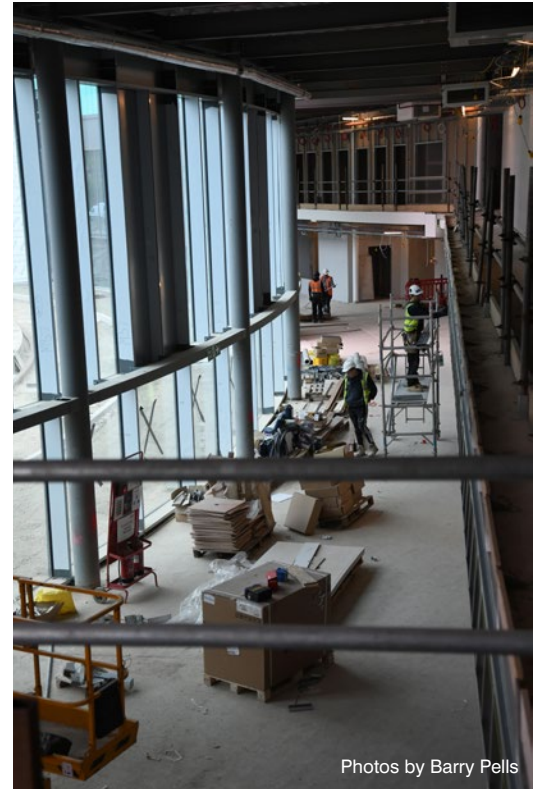
**01670 624889 | [admissions@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@northumberland.gov.uk)**



**Every day is an open day!**

**f @PontelandCommunityPrimary**

**[www.ponteland.academy](http://www.ponteland.academy)**



Photos by Barry Pells

# Lockdown disruption could scupper September opening for new schools

**Plans to open a £43m schools and leisure development in time for the new school year in early September could be scuppered by the COVID-19 lockdown.**

The latest stage of the huge scheme, which started on Monday (April 27th) is the road reconstruction works by the County Highways Team to provide the new accesses to the complex. A one-way system has been introduced on Callerton Lane for an 18-week period to enable this to be completed.

During the roadworks, Northumberland County Council will also be carrying out advanced design work of surface water drainage on behalf of the Environment Agency.

These works will complement the Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme and will aim to capture surface water that, in times of extreme weather, currently flows along Callerton Lane and has the potential to flood properties in the Mayfair Gardens area.

But restrictions to normal site operating procedures to meet current social distancing rules could potentially threaten the remaining build schedule for the overall scheme.

Coun Glen Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services, said: "It is crucial we get these works done now to allow the schools to open as soon as possible.

"As with any major project there will be a small level of disruption which we are working to keep to a minimum, but I want to thank people in advance for their understanding while this critical infrastructure for this wonderful project is created."

Kier said despite the disruption caused by the lockdown, during April progress on the build has included final fix works to the primary and secondary teaching wings and works to the internal crescent areas. Externally, hard landscape shaping is well advanced and asphalt surfacing and block paving is due to progress imminently.

Once finished, the development will feature a 1,600-pupil secondary school, a 420-pupil primary school, a 52-place nursery, a leisure centre and pool, a library and a café.

There has been huge demand from parents for the new High School, with 499 applications for the 240 available Year 7 places and the inevitable disappointment from those who have

missed out - with priority given to the immediate catchment area.

The County Council could not confirm whether the opening date for the new schools could now be delayed, but said this was under continuous review.

Coun Wayne Daley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, said: "We're in the final stages of this ambitious project to provide two fantastic new schools plus state-of-the-art leisure, community and sports facilities - one of the largest developments ever delivered by the council.

"Our contractors are working within Government guidelines around social distancing, and additional welfare facilities are being provided so that the number of operatives on site can be maximised. We are closely monitoring deliveries to the site, as some key components for the development are coming from Europe and beyond.

"We will continue to review timelines and any changes that are required to schedules will be widely communicated to all stakeholders in this important project."

\* See the latest update from contractor Kier on the back page.



# Thanks for your support during these testing times



By PC Phil Oliver, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

**First of all, I must offer my thanks to the overwhelming majority of residents to their attitude and behaviour shown during these testing times.**

At Northumbria Police we pride ourselves on the fantastic relationships we have formed with our communities and now more than ever we need you to work with us.

Government legislation was recently passed which granted police new powers regarding the restrictions put in place to prevent the spread of Coronavirus (Covid-19).

The force resolves issues every single day by talking to members of the public and the neighbourhood policing team will continue to do this by engaging, explaining and encouraging people to follow stay-at-home restrictions.

We have no desire to use the formal powers now made available to police but it's right that we're able to enforce against those who disregard these measures and put people at risk.

These are unprecedented times and we ask that you work

with us and other emergency services. Please stay at home to prevent the spread of the virus so we can protect the NHS and ultimately save lives. Together we can all make a difference.

## Community engagement

Due to the current Covid-19 outbreak, there will be no scheduled community engagement activities until further notice.

## Contact the team

At present, the public enquiry desk at the team's base within the Spetchells Centre on Front Street, Prudhoe, is closed; the nearest currently open enquiry desks are at Hexham or Bedlington police stations. However, please do not hesitate to contact the team in relation to any community issues via [northernprudhoeptmailbox@northumbria.pnn.police.uk](mailto:northernprudhoeptmailbox@northumbria.pnn.police.uk).

For any other issues, you can report an incident or provide information via the force website [northumbria.police.uk](http://northumbria.police.uk) or call 999 or 101 as usual.

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

## Thinking of extending or even building your own dream home?

Richard Ruddick Architecture are RIBA Chartered Architects specialising in bespoke residential extensions, new builds and developments, with full project management available.

As architects we strive to create bespoke, tailored designs with the assured level of expertise and professionalism.

Please contact us to arrange a time for us to discuss your project with you.



**BOOK YOUR FREE CONSULTATION TODAY!**



## CONTACT US

T: 0191 209 6020 E: [info@rruddick.co.uk](mailto:info@rruddick.co.uk)  
[www.rruddick.co.uk](http://www.rruddick.co.uk)

**RIBA** Chartered Practice



## Want the best lawn ever?

SAVE UP TO  
**25%**

All you have to do is sign up to our Enhanced or Complete programmes  
Find out more and visit [greenthumb.co.uk](http://greenthumb.co.uk)

Prices from  
**£15\***  
per treatment



## Who are GreenThumb:

As pioneers in British lawn care, we are the UK's largest and most recommended provider with millions of treatments taking place across the UK every year. With over 30 years of experience, you can rely on us to provide your lawn with the **very best care**

## What we do:

Our lawn care experts apply bespoke, seasonal treatments to keep your lawn continually nourished and weed free. Whatever the size or condition, we ensure that every lawn receives the **love and attention it deserves**

Find out more and visit [greenthumb.co.uk/treatments](http://greenthumb.co.uk/treatments)

For a **FREE** lawn analysis call 0191 4886202 or email [newcastle@greenthumb.co.uk](mailto:newcastle@greenthumb.co.uk)

\*Based on a lawn size up to 40m²

[greenthumb.co.uk](http://greenthumb.co.uk)



# The stock markets: bulls, bears and gritted teeth

By David Lamb, Lamb Financial

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) is obviously a humanitarian tragedy, which is where most of the Government and society's focus should be. However, the resulting economic and market uncertainty has seen stock markets experiencing very large falls.**

The current economic situation is unusual because it comprises of shocks to both demand and supply.

A demand shock means that people are less willing or able to spend because they are unwilling to go out in public or travel abroad. A supply shock means that firms are less able to produce, either because cities are put into lockdown, businesses temporarily close down or schools shut or because intermediate inputs to production processes sourced from China or elsewhere are unavailable, causing production to be suspended.

## Bull and bear markets

A bull market is when prices are rising or are expected to rise; a bear market is the opposite. I think we can safely say we are experiencing a bear market at present!

The chart below shows how investors, who have gritted their teeth during

bear markets, have more than made up their losses when the markets return to growth.

Since 1980, according to data from Thomson Reuters Datastream, there have been five bear markets in the UK; these market swings are normal (even if the current falls are exceptional).

It is important to recognise that switching funds within your portfolio, with the hope of avoiding a loss or banking gains, rarely works and could have a detrimental effect on long-term performance.

Between 2000 and 2019, the Standard and Poor's 500 Index had a compound annual return of 6.1%, but if the best 10 days during this period were excluded, the index would have returned just 2.4%. Excluding the 25 best days, it would have had a -1.0% average return. (Source: S&P 500 Total Return Index with Global Financial Data extension)

It all comes back to gritting your teeth, and remaining in the markets, because after a downturn you might not have to wait long to see one of the good market days. We have experienced very sharp market falls and when the concerns over the virus

subside, there is nothing to say (but nothing to guarantee) that markets will not rise sharply.

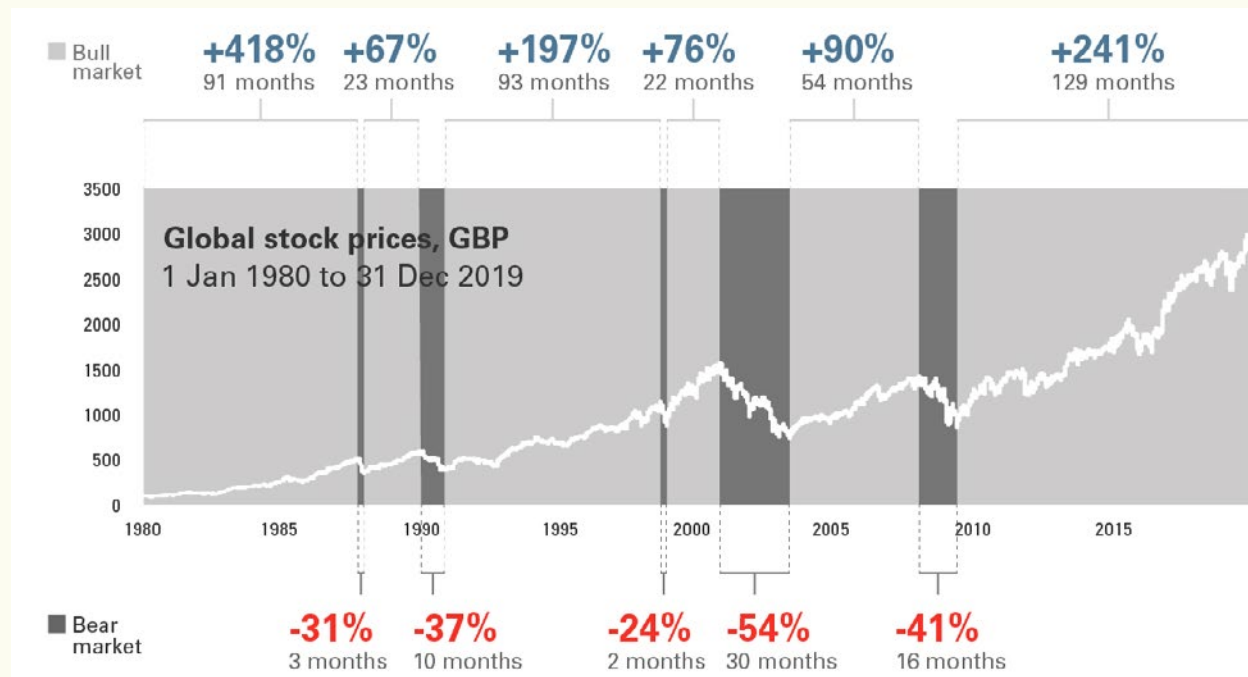
The best and worst days tend to cluster together, a major reason why successful market timing is largely a myth.

I recently wrote a blog entitled 'Market Drivers; Fear and Greed', suggesting that a lot of the investment industry is driven by psychology. When faced with market turmoil, many investors find themselves making impulsive decisions when what is required is discipline and perspective that can help us remain committed to long-term investment strategies through periods of market uncertainty.

Investors should remain patient and stay invested in a broad range of asset classes. If you have a portfolio structured to match your personal investment risk profile, it is unlikely that performance will directly match that of the stock market.

Next month I will consider what actually happens behind the headlines when we hear that billions of pounds have been wiped off the stock market and share with you three mistakes to avoid.

## Global stock prices, GDP



Source: Vanguard analysis based on the MSCI World Index from 1st January 1980, to 31st December 1987, and the MSCI AC World Index thereafter. Vanguard's count of corrections excludes those that turn into a bear market. They count corrections that occur after a bear market has recovered from its trough even if stock prices have not yet reached their previous peak. Past performance is no guarantee of future returns. The performance of an index is not an exact representation of any particular investment, as you cannot invest directly in an index.

# Volunteers help the vulnerable

A group of volunteers brought together to help vulnerable Ponteland residents during the COVID-19 lockdown has already helped 200 people. Joint organiser Dr Ela Akay describes the fantastic joint community effort.

Ponteland Community is a mutual aid group, set up to help people through the Covid-19 pandemic and powered by a group of local volunteers. Our purpose is to help the vulnerable members in our community and to keep local residents updated with relevant information and local resources during COVID-19.

We believe that by working together we can support our vulnerable community members and local businesses. By day we all work in varying jobs, from teachers and doctors to accountants and a talent director! You can find out more at [ponteland.co/about](http://ponteland.co/about)

We have had an amazing response from people offering to help, with more than 150 people registering to volunteer. We are so grateful that so many generous people want to give up their time to help their local community at such a difficult time.

In order to organise our response, we have divided Ponteland into 14 smaller geographic zones. Each has a lead volunteer to co-ordinate the local volunteers and help people in need. We are currently helping with food shopping, delivering prescriptions and checking in on people.

Our key initiative has been to set up an online small order shop and delivery service with Waitrose six days a week to help people who are vulnerable and are having to self-isolate to get the food they need to stay healthy.

We aim to deliver the food 24 or 48 hours



Delivery duty: volunteer Meg Ellis. Pic by Barry Pells

after it has been ordered and we are currently delivering around 100 orders a week. By being able to provide people with the food they are now self isolating and not putting themselves at risk by going out shopping.

We are also working with both the local GP Practices, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the County Council's Community Response Teams, who are referring people on to us who need help. Please pass on our details if you know someone who might need a little extra help.

Recent activities have included putting together 700 toiletry bags which we have donated for use by patients in our local hospitals and helping to connect people who want to make and donate PPE and other essential items for NHS, social care and care home staff. Any keen sewers please get in touch!

Providing information to help people cope during COVID-19 is also important. Many of you will be experiencing the challenge of home schooling children whilst juggling working from home. To help you, our teacher volunteers have collected a range of excellent and extensive resources to help your children's home school education.

The educational information on our website also includes volunteer teacher contacts for advice and fun ideas to keep your children happy and busy. We recently held an Easter Art Competition with the theme of 'Hope and Kindness' with entries judged by CBBC's Yasmin Evans. Congratulations to the winners and thank you to all the entrants!

On our website you will find lots of useful resources including up to date information on:

- Local food suppliers and restaurant pickup/deliveries to support our local economy
- GP and pharmacy opening times and delivery information
- Looking after your mental health with local mental health support tools
- Digital events including local online worship streaming and other free offers
- Local resources in our Community Noticeboard including key local organisations
- Local business directory.

We have a leaflet that you can download at [ponteland.co/helpandvolunteer](http://ponteland.co/helpandvolunteer) or you can refer someone to us by phone, email or on our website. But if you have any ideas or up to date information you would like us to share, if you would like to volunteer or register yourself or someone else for help, please get in touch:

Email: [hello@ponteland.co](mailto:hello@ponteland.co)

Website: [ponteland.co](http://ponteland.co)

Tel: Ponteland Town Council  
**01661 825092** who will take a message and forward it on to us

Facebook: [facebook.com/groups/Pontelandcommunity/](https://facebook.com/groups/Pontelandcommunity/)

Twitter: [@PontelandCommunity](https://twitter.com/PontelandCommunity)



# Schools and nurseries helping parents during lockdown

From schools remaining open for the children of key workers to nurseries helping parents at home entertain their toddlers, it has remained a busy time for many working in education and early years.

Ponteland Community Middle School has been open to up to seven key worker or vulnerable children during the lockdown, with online resources for all pupils and weekly calls to parents and pupils at home.

Headteacher Dr Caroline Pryer said: "Children come in depending on their parents' shifts or working patterns. Staff are on a rota leading entertaining and challenging activities as well as creative and thinking skills tasks.

"Two teachers come in each day. NHS parents, whose roles range from consultants, surgeons, doctors,

nurses and community staff, have been appreciative of the resource as children are happy and busy in school with a few friends. The morning is Maths, English and a Joe Wicks session with an afternoon outside doing PE, sports or forest school projects."

Ponteland Private Nursery closed on March 20th but is using an online learning journal called Tapestry with individual accounts for each child.

Nursery Manager Claire Dyer said: "Normally we upload photos and videos of children participating in activities at nursery so parents can observe the fun their child is having in nursery and leave a comment.

"Now our amazing staff are working from home, uploading interesting activities and suggestions to help and support our parents through this very difficult time. Our parents are continually giving us fantastic feedback, saying how much they appreciate the support."



A Ponteland Middle School pupil enjoying afternoon forest school activity.

The County Council has also launched online learning resources to support children while they are not attending school. They include arts and crafts activities, free online coding courses, language lessons and exercise classes and can be accessed at: [northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus/Northumberland-schools](https://northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus/Northumberland-schools)

## Guy Opperman MP

Member of Parliament  
for Hexham

*The Hexham office is physically closed due to the outbreak of Coronavirus, but I, and my small team of staff, are working remotely to provide advice, and support individuals, businesses, and local people who are affected. Help will be provided by email and telephone. If you have any issues or concerns, please get in touch using the details below, but check the Coronavirus website below first if you can.*

*Guy Opperman.*



### Get in touch with Guy:

@ [TeamOppy@gmail.com](mailto:TeamOppy@gmail.com)

☎ 01434 239 205 (LEAVE A MESSAGE WITH YOUR CONTACT DETAILS)

f [fb.com/GuyOpperman](https://fb.com/GuyOpperman)

Find the latest support available for individuals, businesses and employers at [GUYOPPERMAN.CO.UK/CORONAVIRUS](https://GUYOPPERMAN.CO.UK/CORONAVIRUS)

### Other important contact details:

If you have coronavirus symptoms, self-isolate immediately.

For medical advice, always visit [NHS.UK/coronavirus](https://NHS.UK/coronavirus).

If you can't get online, call 111. Only in an emergency call 999.

**Northumberland Communities Together:**  
(Northumberland County Council)

01670 620015

[NorthumberlandCommunitiesTogether@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:NorthumberlandCommunitiesTogether@northumberland.gov.uk)

**Universal Credit helpline:**

0800 328 5644

**Foreign Office Consular Assistance:**

020 7008 1500

**School closures helpline:**

0800 046 0687

**BEIS Business Support and ventilators:**

0300 456 3565

**Employers help with Statutory Sick Pay:**

03000 560 630

**HMRC:**

0800 015 9559

# Thanks to volunteers and key workers

*By Coun Alan Varley, Mayor of Ponteland*



**I would like to thank everyone who is abiding by the restrictions imposed by the Government to try to limit the effects of this awful coronavirus.**

Many volunteers have come forward to give assistance with shopping and other necessary tasks which not everybody can manage to do themselves.

I would like to particularly praise the Ponteland COVID-19 Mutual Aid Group, which has been magnificent in matching volunteers with those who are 'locked down' - thus ensuring that essential items can be obtained when available.

So, I applaud you all - your unstinting help will long be remembered. I know there are other local groups out there who are also helping those in need and your work is very much appreciated.

Of equal importance, I give further thanks to those people whom we continue to see every day in their workplace. I refer, of course, to those who work in the various supermarkets and other shops in and around our town. They have faced the biggest risks in dealing with the general public yet still they remain in good humour and have ensured that, when we need our essentials, for the most part they have been available.

Likewise, I must not forget to thank those who look after the most vulnerable in their retirement homes. I have been fortunate to see at first hand the love and dedication which all staff offer.

To all those Ponteland residents who work in the NHS, please continue with your best efforts to save lives whilst ensuring that you remain safe yourselves and that your PPE is fit for purpose.

We must not forget those council employees, both at the County Council and the Town Council, who have continued to provide essential services during this difficult time. Bins have been emptied, grass has been cut, litter and dog waste bins have been emptied - to mention but a few items. These people are also putting themselves at risk and I thank them for what they are doing.

I sincerely hope that when it's all over, we will be able to look back and give thanks to all those who have given their time for the public good. Please continue to follow the rules and ensure that you all remain safe.

# Parishioners flock online as church services go virtual

**Hundreds of parishioners in Ponteland have gone online as churches are forced to hold their services remotely due to the lockdown.**

Church of England services have been streamed live from Newcastle Cathedral, while Methodists can now tune in to weekly worship via YouTube.

The Reverend Captain Paul Allinson, Vicar of Ponteland, said: "The Ponteland Parish website has links to the Church of England Online Church Hub, which is broadcasting a weekly national Sunday Service.

"We have also included links to services being streamed from Newcastle Cathedral along with other resources and updated weekly content. There are also links there to the Church of England Daily Prayers (morning, evening and night prayers). I'm posting prayers, pictures and other material most days on the Ponteland Facebook page."

Rev Jona Sewell of Ponteland Methodist Church said local Methodist churches have been working together to produce high quality weekly worship which is pre-recorded and edited before being uploaded to YouTube ready for Sunday morning viewing.

Rev Sewell said: "Worship has been produced for every Sunday since the church buildings closed their doors, with additional services produced for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, in addition to Easter Day. All services, previous and future, can be found on the YouTube channel by searching for 'Newcastle West Methodist Circuit'."

# Waste recycling centres reopen

**Household waste recycling centres in Northumberland are to reopen on Monday (May 4th) with a restricted service following a period of closure.**

The move follows fresh Government guidance which advised councils they could reopen such centres if social distancing could be maintained.

Details of opening times and site restrictions at the 12 centres in Northumberland can be found here: [northumberland.gov.uk/Waste/Tip.aspx](http://northumberland.gov.uk/Waste/Tip.aspx)

Cemeteries and burial grounds remain open, but visitors are asked to adhere to social distancing.



# Your letters

The Editor  
Pont News & Views



Criticism of new car park charging plans and an initial reluctance to join national 'Clap for our carers' in this month's letters...

## Ill thought out Memorial Hall charging scheme should be 'parked'

**Ponteland Memorial Hall was opened in 1922 after funding by local residents to commemorate the fallen of WWI and benefit the community.**

Fast forward to today and residents are now being asked to pay to park to use the facilities provided by their forebears.

The reason put forward is to provide funds to maintain the car park which, let's face it, is used by not only the users of the Hall but dog walkers in the park and folks shopping in the village which admittedly isn't strictly 'Hall business' but is still a community benefit.

Could it be made public what the start-up cost will be to install this parking system and its ongoing annual charges and how much of the perceived income will go to the organisation running it, who they are, and how much if anything, will go to swell the coffers of the Hall?

What will the administration costs be to follow up non-payments and penalty notices etc?

I cannot recall seeing any appeal for contributions from the residents who could, in the spirit of the original fundraisers, contribute to a maintenance fund - a fiver per household won't break anyone's bank - or has any approach to the local authority been made for help?

From their website, I gather the Hall, being a charity, has about £1,500 in surplus at present; the car park is not the size of the third runway at Heathrow.

As a point of interest, not long ago our local authority resurfaced one third of the length of both Edge Hill and Middle Drive for about £80,000 apiece and I doubt the Hall car park is that size.

What is the extent of the repairs or maintenance needed to the car park which requires this change of policy and has it been costed?

What I do envisage is residents boycotting the car park in favour of parking along Darras Road and its surrounding streets, which will cause the road traffic to reduce to single lane movement and general frustration becoming the norm, not to mention potential collisions.

I appreciate there are always two sides to any decision; usually the right one and the wrong one, but I believe this charging decision is in the latter category and should be 'parked'.

I rarely use the Hall car park but I'll still happily put my fiver in the pot if an appeal is launched - but only if this ill thought out scheme is abandoned.

**P Vacheun**

Edge Hill, Darras Hall

## Road's residents slow to show their appreciation for NHS heroes

**Whilst the rest of the country united in applause, Runnymede Road (Ponteland end) was dark, deserted and eerily quiet.**

We were the only residents outside at 8pm on April 2nd with flashing torches, pans and good humour in order to thank those working on the front line in the fight against coronavirus.

Should we not show our support to the incredible staff, carers and volunteers across health and care who are working long hours and in such dangerous conditions to save lives?

Come along, residents; put aside the feeling of self-isolation and show how much you care. Support the NHS in true neighbourly fashion by uniting in applause at the next session.

**Rosalynde Anderson**

Runnymede Rd, Darras Hall

**Note:** Since writing my last letter on April 2nd I'm delighted to report that the residents of Runnymede Road on the fourth clapping session appeared in full force to recognise the dedication of all the NHS workers. Well done everyone!

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.

Boost  
your child's  
confidence



Liz Burrin

Kumon Instructor **07765 051136**

**#KumonKidsCanStudyAtHome**

**KUMON**

**June issue deadlines:** The May issue is once again online only due to the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown. At the time of publication we were unable to confirm whether the June issue will revert to door-to-door distribution. We are offering half price advertising for all online only issues. The deadline for all copy and adverts for the June issue is Monday May 18th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the June issue. Please visit [ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views](http://ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views) for online issues and all updates.

# Memorial Hall trustees in desperate appeal for donations

**Trustees at Ponteland Memorial Hall have issued a desperate plea for donations, describing the venue's financial situation as "precarious".**

With the ongoing lockdown forcing closure, all usual income from user groups has ceased and after nearly 100 years the hall's continued existence is under real threat.

Robin Ramsay MBE, Chairman of Ponteland Memorial Hall, said: "We very much appreciate the support that the community has given the hall over the past 97 years. However the financial situation for the Hall is precarious and we are appealing for financial help as all our income (c. £5,000 per month) has dried up.

"We do realise that several of you are in a serious situation yourselves but if you can help us it would be much appreciated. Any such money would help to close the financial gap by replacing some of our income.

"The Memorial Hall has been serving the community for nearly 100 years and we will strive to make sure that it can continue for future generations. We have very limited financial reserves and we will only be able to survive for three to four months unless we can drastically reduce our costs and obtain alternative income.

"We have stopped all non-essential



expenditure, minimised heating and will take advantage of the Government's furlough leave scheme to reduce payroll costs. We will also be investigating if there is any other expenditure that we can postpone.

"I would also mention our 200 club which for a modest fee of £25 a year can also make a difference to our situation. If you are interested you can contact our office or via email to [info@pontelandmemorialhall.com](mailto:info@pontelandmemorialhall.com).

"We are well aware that in making this appeal there will be many charities making similar appeals and we may

have to take our place in the queue for your support. Whatever charity you like to support do remember them, as all are struggling at this time."

The bank details for those who can help with direct financial support is:  
Ponteland Memorial Hall Committee  
Sort code 20 - 59 - 61  
Account no. 70721891

Anyone making donations who can, is urged to gift aid their contribution to increase its value. Contact the Treasurer at [david@potentilla.org.uk](mailto:david@potentilla.org.uk) and he will send you the necessary form.

---

## Budding entrepreneurs and journalists sought for new Community Partnership initiatives

**Budding entrepreneurs and journalists are being invited to apply for two new opportunities being offered by Ponteland Community Partnership.**

The first scheme 'Entrepreneurs of the Future' seeks students with a business plan, either ready to go or already started. PCP wants to hear from you about your business idea.

All applications will be considered and a shortlist of candidates will be invited to a future "Dragons' Den" event where you will be expected to pitch your idea to local businesspeople for some funding.

The second project is 'Website Youth Reporter'. Would you like to try your hand at writing an article for the Community Partnership's website? Could you write about something you feel passionate about or a topical or of local interest?

All articles will be considered by the editorial group to be included on a new section of the PCP website and will also be considered for the [pontelandonline.co.uk](http://pontelandonline.co.uk) site.

Each month a shortlist of successful applications for the schemes will be considered for a prize in recognition of their efforts, in two age categories - 14 to 16 and 16-plus.

To apply, visit [pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk/contact-us](http://pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk/contact-us)



# Ponteland Rotary donates £500 to care charity hit by lockdown

The Rotary Club of Ponteland has donated £500 to support a local charity whose fundraising has been badly hit by the COVID-19 lockdown.

Tynedale Hospice at Home, which delivers essential care services in the community, was forced to close all four of its charity shops including the branch in Merton Way, Ponteland, on March 19th.

The shops account for one third of the annual income for the charity, which provides home-based end of life care, pre and post bereavement support and a hospital transport service for those with a life-limiting diagnosis.

Alan Hall, President of Rotary Ponteland, said: "The work which the Hospice provides to residents in Ponteland, Tynedale and West Northumberland is invaluable. We wanted to do something to support the community in Ponteland and a donation to Tynedale Hospice at Home seemed to tick all the right boxes."



Cathy Bates, Senior Fundraiser, Tynedale Hospice at Home with the Ponteland Rotary cheque.

John Harrison, Chair of Trustees at Tynedale Hospice at Home, added: "We are grateful to The Rotary Club of Ponteland for their ongoing support which will ensure that we help families in the best way we can during this difficult time."

Meanwhile more than £200,000 has been raised towards a £1m appeal

to save a much loved North-East charitable hospice.

As this issue went live, 1,670 supporters had donated £201,548 towards St Oswald's Hospice's Covid-19 Response Appeal. The Gosforth-based hospice is urgently asking for donations to fund its vital services, saying the pandemic has been its biggest and gravest challenge in its 34-year history.

All 25 St Oswald's charity shops across the region have closed and most planned fundraising events and campaigns for the spring and summer have been postponed or cancelled.

The charity's bosses have estimated that these vital measures will lead to a loss in fundraising revenue of £1,125,000 over the next three months. As a frontline service which supports the NHS, St Oswald's offers end of life care, respite breaks, bereavement support, Lymphoedema treatment and day services for adults, children and babies.

## Looking after your legal needs for 40 years

At this difficult time for us all we wanted to offer reassurance that the team at Nicholson & Morgan have adapted our working methods to ensure we can continue to work for all our clients.

We are available to offer specialist advice on Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney, Residential and Commercial Property, and Contract Disputes throughout the current lockdown.

**N&M NICHOLSON  
& MORGAN**  
— S O L I C I T O R S —

You can contact us by email at [law@nicholsonmorgan.co.uk](mailto:law@nicholsonmorgan.co.uk) or by calling **01661 871012** and for more information visit [nicholsonmorgan.co.uk](http://nicholsonmorgan.co.uk)

14 Bell Villas, Ponteland, Northumberland, NE20 9BE

# Classmates make a splash at championships with triple gold medal-winning haul



Two classmates from Darras Hall Primary School have won 15 medals at the 2020 Northumberland and Durham County Swimming Championships.

Year 6 pupils Evelyn Hallissey and Finn Proud, who both swim for Newcastle Swim Team, were each triple gold medalists amongst their huge hauls.

Evelyn won golds in 50m, 100m and 200m backstroke, silvers in 50m fly and 200m individual medley, and bronze medals in 100m and 200m breaststroke.

Finn won golds in 50m, 100m and 200m fly, a silver in 200m individual medley and bronze medals in 100m, 200m and 400m freestyle and 50m backstroke.

Both also achieved qualifying times to compete at the North East Regional Championships in Leeds.

Evelyn and Finn train six times per week in the same squad at Newcastle Swim Team under their coach Michele Davison, Head of Junior Development.

The championships were held at Sunderland Aquatic Centre prior to the COVID-19 lockdown.



**BATTERY POWER - JOIN THE CORDLESS REVOLUTION**



**HONDA**

**STIHL**®

Scots Gap, Morpeth, NE61 4DT - 01670 774205  
Garden Machinery, Robotic Mower & Chainsaw Specialists  
[www.robsonandcowan.co.uk](http://www.robsonandcowan.co.uk)





# Photographer captures unique memories of lockdown life

**A Ponteland photographer is giving local families a unique memento of life during the lockdown with a doorstep service with a difference.**

For Deb Parker is taking pictures of people in the area while all are having to stay at home, in return for a donation to the NHS.

Deb, who normally works at weddings and other special events with her business Imogen Kate Photography, got the idea from a friend after reading about something similar abroad.

She said: "I thought 'why not?' If it's good enough for Switzerland, it's good enough for Ponteland."

The demand has been so high Deb is creating a daily route, arriving by bike. Since starting the service on April 21st she has visited 40 families in Ponteland and Darras Hall and has many more pencilled in. Photos are taken from a safe distance either on the doorstep or in the garden, providing there is access without going inside the house.

Subjects so far have included Annabel Kamali celebrating her first birthday and Deb's 98-year-old neighbour Chrissie Hartnell.

Deb added: "I really didn't expect it to be so popular - everyone is saying it will give them something in the future to remember the year we had to lockdown."

Within the first week £385 had been raised for NHS Charities Together and other donations can be made via the Justgiving page at [justgiving.com/fundraising/imogenkatephotography](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/imogenkatephotography)

To book your photograph contact Deb at [hello@imogenkate.co.uk](mailto:hello@imogenkate.co.uk) or via her website [imogenkate.co.uk](https://www.imogenkate.co.uk) or Facebook page at [facebook.com/imogenkatephotography](https://www.facebook.com/imogenkatephotography).



# Ponteland Schools and Leisure

## Kier Regional Building Scotland & North East



### Dear Resident,

Over the past 6 weeks or so, we've seen our way of life and how we interact change drastically, and we have been required to implement some extreme changes in our operating procedures to ensure we continue to make progress on the construction of the new community campus. The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak has affected us all one way or another; be it through the virus affecting family members, our interaction with each other, the education of our children, or how we work. HM Government has publicly supported the continued operation of the construction industry and, as such, a document was published by the Construction Leadership Council with revised Site Operating Procedures that had to be implemented to allow construction sites to continue operating. Within Kier, we updated our Standard Operating Procedures to incorporate these guidelines, and in certain areas, we went further in our implementation process. This has required discussion with our supply chain, resulting in long-serving tradespeople having to change a lifetime of operating processes – it has been a swift period of re-education within the industry, and one that continues to change as Government recommendations are updated.

Despite the ongoing re-education process, we have continued to make progress through April with final fix works to the Primary and Secondary teaching wings, as well as progressing works to the internal Crescent areas. M&E services have progressed well to all areas with the main focus now being on the Crescent areas and Pool Hall.

We have continued our sequential close-out process to the teaching wings with the Client team, and this will continue through the remainder of the building through to the completion of the Project.

Works have continued at pace to the external areas, with the hard landscape shaping well advanced, and asphalt surfacing and block paving due to progress imminently.

#### What works will progress in the next 4 weeks?

- Complete M&E installations to the Primary School.
- Progress Live Testing and Commissioning to the Primary School.
- Substantially Complete the internal finishes to the Primary School.
- Progress external works to the Primary School.
- Complete colour-coat render panels to the Primary School.
- Complete M&E installations to the Secondary School.
- Progress Live Testing and Commissioning to the Secondary School.
- Substantially Complete the internal finishes to the Secondary School.
- Continue to progress external works to the Secondary School.
- Complete colour-coat render panels to the Secondary School.
- 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.
- Progress specialist Spa installation works.
- Continue to progress works to the bridleway.
- Progress with the construction of the Southern Car Park.

As you will have seen from the road cones and barriers, enabling works have been progressing for the road reconstruction works required to Callerton Lane. These works are being completed by the NCC Highways team. The main works commenced 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and are programmed to take 18 weeks to complete.

#### **Watch Points through May**

- Daily traffic movements in and out of the site
- Progression of external hardscape works.
- Progression of works to the Bridleway.
- NCC Highways roadworks to Callerton Lane.

#### **CSR & Project Quick Facts**

The completion of the construction of the main Community Campus will take over 500,000 people hours, which equates to an average resource level in excess of 150 people per week.



If you have any concerns or queries, 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)

