

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district

15th
anniversary
issue



Power struggle continues at
County Hall as Leader removed

Listed buildings at former
police HQ going up for sale

Suspected teenage poachers
picked up after deer killed

Friends fund dream trip for brave Summer

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Summer during her treatment

Disneyland trip for brave Summer after leukaemia battle

A brave little girl from Ponteland will celebrate her recovery from cancer with a dream holiday to Disneyland, Florida.

For family, friends and other generous well-wishers have donated nearly £6,000 to five-year-old Summer Robinson, who has endured more than two years of gruelling treatment for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.

The fundraising was revealed in a surprise street party outside the family home in Elmwood Drive arranged for the day she 'rang the bell'.

Mum Nicola said: "We had asked a few people to come for a toast to celebrate her milestone and have a hotdog. But we returned to Disney princesses, a pony and an ice cream van!

"It was amazing and when friends revealed they had been raising funds to send Summer to Disneyland it totally blew our minds. It's been her dream to go to Disneyland and when it's safe to do so that's the first thing on our list.

"Seeing her face when they told her where she was going was such a magical moment for her and us. We could not believe how amazingly generous and caring our community is and we would like to thank everyone from the bottom of our hearts.

"Sarah (Nixon who led the fundraising) is the most amazing friend anyone could ask for - along with my other friends she has been there by my side constantly throughout Summer's treatment."

The terrifying cancer diagnosis came just five days after Summer's third birthday. She had been tired and kept getting an ear infection and, suspecting something was wrong, Dr Lily Lamb at Ponteland Medical Group sent her to Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital for blood tests.

Nicola said: "There we got the most devastating news of our life. They knew it was leukaemia and she was rushed to RVI for blood and platelet transfusions and to start immediate treatment.

"We were devastated – it felt like our whole world was ripped apart. It was so intensive and full on and Summer had to deal with so much. She has been the bravest strongest person we have ever met and never let it stop her."

Nicola, who is married to HMRC officer Steven and also has daughter Jordan, 21, son Bailey, 14, and daughter Layla, eight, left her job with Royal Mail at Ponteland Delivery Office to care for Summer.

She said: "Summer has been unbelievable in treatment. Even though she had to get a lot of horrible procedures done in hospital she always gave everything her all and was never

scared to go, as she knew they were there to help her.

"We had to stay in hospital a lot as throughout treatment she had no immune system and caught a lot of bugs. The majority of the time she was neutropenic and could pick up bugs that would never bother a healthy immune system."

The Ponteland Primary School pupil still has a compromised immune system and will have to attend hospital regularly for blood counts for the next five years, and continue to have her heart monitored throughout her life.

The family have also had to come to terms with the tragic death of Steven's father Michael the day after Summer's celebration party, after a very short battle with pancreatic cancer.

Thanks go to the following businesses: One Stop; Blackbird Inn; Rialtos; The Badger; Hooker and Young; Jan's Kitchen; Sarah Nixon Massage & Beauty; Malhotra Group; Hair by Diane W; Bodylicious Beauty; Pawfect Days; New Light Holistic Health; Taylor-Made Parties; Oh So Boho; Penny Pieces; Parklands Chemist; Ponteland CIU; Aubury Designs; Scentsational; Amy Wood; Tyne Valley Ices; Oh La La Occasions and Events

Pictured (l-r) are Steven, Bailey, Layla, Summer, Nicola and Jordan. Photos by Alice & Diane Photography.

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Teenagers apprehended after deer killed

Two suspected teenage poachers were apprehended after reports of the killing of a deer near Ponteland.

Both young men have received advice in front of their parents after being found in the vicinity of the dead animal, which had been abandoned near Ogle in the early hours of September 5th.

Equipment suspected to have been used in poaching, including lamps, was seized from vehicles suspected to have been involved in the incident. As it could not be proved that the two suspects had killed the deer, they were instead taken home to their parents.

Operation Hawkeye, the force's new team dedicated to tackling rural crime, had responded to the call from a member of a public about the deer.

Rural Crime Team officer PC Alex Partington, one of the leading officers on the investigation, promised rural

communities that patrols targeting poachers will continue.

He said: "Often we need to find poachers in the act to be able to bring forward criminal charges but what we can do is seize their equipment and force them out of the area. The response at the weekend was fantastic as they acted on local intelligence to hunt down two teenagers we believed to have been poaching.

"They may not face any criminal charges but we have seized a huge amount of equipment and they won't be returning to the countryside any time soon. This is only one recent example of ongoing efforts to tackle, disrupt and prevent rural crime across our force area.

"This positive police action will continue and will only strengthen our stance against anyone found to be committing or contributing to these types of crimes in the communities we serve."

Anyone with any concerns about poaching or rural crime should contact police via 101.



Club champion Harry presented with winning shield on his own turf

By Keith Hope

Dalton Carpet Bowls Club Champion Harry Harmieson has been presented with his winning shield - on his own turf.

The club's new season should have started on Monday September 7th with an AGM and this presentation.

But due to Covid this could not happen, so the Club Secretary and Treasurer Brian and Judith Oliver visited Harry and presented him with the shield (socially distancing) in his garden.



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Patrols stepped up to tackle anti-social behaviour and speeding



PC 8020 Phil Oliver, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

Anti-social behaviour

Your local policing team has been conducting regular patrols in recent weeks in order to tackle anti-social behaviour by youths in the wooded area and by the River Pont behind Richmond Way, and the track leading from The Crescent to Limestone Lane. These patrols will continue for some time and police will deal robustly with any individuals identified as causing regular issues. I would ask parents and guardians to be wary about the whereabouts of their children, especially on weekends and in the evenings. I urge residents to report any incidents or concerns to police.

Warning to agricultural vehicles

Concerns have been raised by residents in outlying villages including Ogle and Whalton of heavy agricultural vehicles being driving at speed or in a careless manner. Members of the farming community are being reminded to drive appropriately, to be wary of their speed when driving through residential areas and to appropriately secure loads. Police will be conducting regular patrols in the area and will take action where necessary.

Speeding

In light of recent incidents in the Ponteland area, officers will be conducting regular Speedwatch operations and road policing patrols in the coming weeks in a bid to increase road safety. The Community Speedwatch initiative is back in operation with appropriate measures put in place in response to Covid-19. During Speedwatch operations conducted on September 3rd and 10th, 25 drivers were found speeding on North Road and Middle Drive. Officers from the team have conducted home visits and issued warnings to persistent speeding offenders.

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. For any other issues, you can contact report an incident or provide information via the force website northumbria.police.uk or call 999 or 101 as usual.

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School hitting the high notes

Ponteland High has been given Music Mark School accreditation in recognition of the school's commitment to providing high-quality music education for all children.

The school's music department runs a variety of extracurricular activities which support and enhance work in the classroom.

They include junior and senior ensembles and choirs, a jazz band, the Whistling Sheep ceilidh band, and production and theory groups which are all available for students to access and give regular performances, including the Learning Alliance Concert at The Sage, Gateshead.

Phil Noble, Director of Music, said: "I am delighted that the

hard work and dedication of both students and staff has been recognised and Ponteland High given this award. Music makes an important contribution to the life of the school. It helps build students' self-esteem, self-discipline, team skills and creativity."

Music Mark is the UK Association for Music Education which champions and supports access to music for all children.

Charity champ Bruce makes final donations

Ponteland charity champ Bruce Grant has made his final donations after a dedicated decade of fundraising.

The 93-year-old grandfather-of-five has paid £750 each to Tynedale Hospice at Home and The Royal Society for Blind Children.

Bruce, who has been a regular sight with his collection tin in Ponteland, Morpeth, Hexham, Kingston Park and Eldon Square in Newcastle over the years, has raised over £100,000 for good causes.

They include more than £70,000 for seven North East charities in the last three years alone - Newcastle People's Kitchen, West End Food Bank, West End Refugee Service, Benwell Cornerstone Project, Children North East, Percy Hedley Foundation and the

Great North Air Ambulance Service.

Bruce received a British Empire Medal in last year's Queen's Birthday Honours for his work with the Pont Charity Group and had been invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace, but this sadly had to be cancelled due to Covid.

His latest donations came from the proceeds from his autobiography on his eventful life on land, air and sea entitled 'Flying by the seat of my pants', which the former engineer described as 'a collection of tales from boyhood, life at sea and in industry'. This has now sold out, with all 100 copies snapped up.

Bruce, of Old Station Court, Darras Hall, was close to death in June after suffering a chest infection and kidney failure. However, after being transferred into palliative care, he bounced back once



Charity champ Bruce Grant, who has made his final donations.

again and was allowed back home.

But he has conceded his days out shaking his tin on the streets in all weathers are now behind him and said: "Many thanks to all

contributors, and especial mention to Colin, from Ponteland Print, for all his support."

And thank you to Bruce, for all you have done!

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Try our questionnaire to score your financial planning

By David Lamb, Lamb Financial

Over the last couple of months, I have suggested investing in a calculator that will help you understand the effect of charges on your investments and discussed the reality of investments.

But if you are paying for financial and investment advice, what really matters is whether you're getting value for money.

I know a lot of financial advisers who say their charges are higher than average, but they provide value for money to justify those higher charges. I don't think it is up to the financial adviser to determine if their client is getting value for money or not, it is up to the client, but how do you measure value for money?

Many advisers, when trying to justify their fees, try to bamboozle their clients with technical jargon; alpha,

beta, Sharpe ratio, information ratio - to name but a few terms. But in my 28 years' experience, most clients aren't interested in the technical aspects of investments and pensions. What they are interested in is achieving and maintaining their desired lifestyle, without the fear of running out of money - whatever happens.

Our clients want to know how much is enough to give them the lifestyle that they want, for their investments to be structured to support their lifestyle without taking unnecessary risk and losing too much because of tax. They want to ensure that, in the event of a catastrophe, they have plans in place to minimise the financial implications and that their family are taken care of and, ultimately, they do not want to worry about money.

But how do you measure these concerns and quantify if you are

getting good value from your financial adviser or planner?

We have devised 10 simple questions that will help you measure how well you are progressing with your financial planning. If your score is low in any areas, you will know where to focus future planning. If your scores are high you can give yourself and your financial adviser a pat on the back. The important thing, though, is to know how well you are doing.

Our questionnaire can be accessed at lambfinancial.co.uk or simply scan the QR code here:



Blackbird Inn owner invests in another historic Northumberland hospitality venue

The owner of Ponteland's Blackbird Inn has reopened another landmark Northumberland hospitality venue after a £70,000 revamp.

Northumberland Pub Co purchased The Northumberland Arms at Felton prior to the lockdown in March, giving plenty of time to refurbish the latest addition to its portfolio.

The former coaching inn, which was originally built in 1820, has been given a fresh coat of paint and new décor with much of the furniture in the bar, garden room and private dining room replaced.

Its six en-suite bedrooms have new TVs and lighting, while a new outdoor dining and drinking space has also been created and furnished – offering stunning views of the River Coquet and a 16th century bridge.

Northumberland Pub Co's Stuart Young said: "I've admired The Northumberland



Another venue for The Blackbird Inn owners - The Northumberland Arms at Felton.

Arms for a long time now and so it was an obvious choice for me when I learnt that the previous owners had decided to sell.

"We acquired the building before lockdown was enforced, so it's given us plenty of time to work on the venue

before we reopened – updating its look while retaining all of its original charm.

"We've had fantastic feedback from diners and with everyone making the most of staycations this year, our picturesque location has proved very popular among guests."

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Power struggle continues at County Hall as Council Leader removed from office

The power struggle at the top at Northumberland County Council shows no sign of abating, with the Council Leader's removal the latest twist in a turbulent few weeks.

Ponteland South with Heddon ward councillor Peter Jackson lost a vote of no confidence in his leadership by a single vote – 33 to 32 – at a meeting of the full council on September 2nd.

The motion was tabled by the opposition Labour group, following the suspension of chief executive Daljit Lally OBE in August – a move which they described as “silencing”.

Describing the previous month as “unbelievable”, Labour leader Coun Susan Dungworth said: “We have seen breaches of the whistleblowing policy, members’ emails disappearing overnight, major personal and professional data breaches, denial of audit committee meetings. Our reputation is in shreds; Northumberland County Council is the laughing stock of the region.”

Three Cramlington Conservative councillors – Wayne Daley, Christine Dunbar and Mark Swinburn – voted against their leader, sealing his fate.

Coun Jackson's removal followed the resignation of three Cabinet colleagues – Ponteland West councillor Veronica Jones, who quit as portfolio holder for adult wellbeing and health, Coun Daley as Deputy Leader and Coun Cath Homer, the cabinet member for arts, culture, leisure and tourism.



Ousted: former Council Leader Peter Jackson

The authority has said Mrs Lally, who has been chief executive since 2017 in a dual role which also sees her as Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's executive director of delivery, is “on a period of extended leave”.

Her suspension followed two emails she sent on Friday August 7th. The first was sent to Cabinet members and raised concerns about Advance Northumberland, the council's development division, and alleged bias and potential conflict on the part of council leader Peter Jackson due to an alleged personal relationship.

The email, copied to deputy chief executive Kelly Angus, claimed Mrs Lally had no option but to follow advice and “put in place some referrals, investigations and measures to protect the council”.

In a second email later the same day, sent to all councillors, she stated: “I have significant whistle blowing concerns that I have raised and that I am further raising as I am concerned about some issues in relation to the operation of the Council.

“I have received some limited responses to my concerns but I remain very concerned about my welfare and that of my exec/senior team and council business.”

Coun Jackson has strenuously denied the allegations, saying: “All such claims are completely without foundation or evidence.”

A formal disciplinary process is underway and, following national regulations, a committee of county councillors under an independent investigator has been established as a part of the disciplinary process. Kelly Angus has been appointed acting chief executive.

A new Council Leader was due to be elected by a meeting of the full council on September 23rd, and the electee will choose their cabinet.

CLARIFICATION

In the September issue in an article about Northumberland County Council, Pont News referred to Active Northumberland as the authority's development division. This should have read Advance Northumberland. Active Northumberland manages all leisure facilities on behalf of NCC, including fitness centres, community sites and beach facilities. Our apologies for any confusion or upset caused by the error.

Outdoor market on this weekend

This weekend sees the latest outdoor market at Ponteland Memorial Hall.

Wilde Farm offers free range meats and eggs, as well as organically grown fresh veg, cheese, fresh bread, preserves, cakes and baked goods, and their best-selling Scotch eggs and sausage rolls.

As well as the food, shoppers can also purchase goat soaps, hand crafted wood, hand made jewellery and homeware.

Entry is free, and the market is dog friendly with hot and cold food and drinks served.

A one way system is operated with hand sanitiser stations at the entrance and exit, and at individual stalls. Reusable cotton masks in a range of beautiful colours and patterns are available to buy at the first stall.

The next markets are Sunday October 4th, Sunday November 1st and Sunday December 13th.

For more information visit:
wildefarm.co.uk/i/wilde-farm-market



Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Darras Hall Estate Committee's chairman says farewell and an appeal to support your local shops in this month's letters...

Estate Committee chairman says farewell

I'm currently looking out on my early autumn Darras Hall gardens, but now it's for the last time. I know I'll miss them.

Unfortunately, as a result of a change in personal circumstances, the family home is sold and the moving date is imminent. This means, of course, I can no longer act as your Chairman as I will no longer be an accessioned owner on the Estate.

So, this is my resignation and my goodbye. Six years ago I walked into my first meeting of the Darras Hall Estate Committee and walked out as Joint Chairman, becoming sole Chairman six months later. Recently retired, I wanted to channel the energy I still had into some kind of community service, I also wanted the challenge and intellectual stimulation of something new. I was not to be disappointed.

Over the last six years I have worked with the Committee and staff to modernise the operation both legally and practically. During my tenure, the archaic Trust was transformed into a Limited Company, electronic banking and card payments were introduced, a new website was built and the now extremely popular Darras Hall Facebook page was set up. All this, of course, was in addition to the normal business of the office, vetting plans, going on site visits, meeting representatives from local stakeholders, businesses etc.

One thing I learned very early on was that the majority of decisions made (usually in conjunction with the Committee) would never be universally popular. This is especially the case with planning. There is often an adversarial situation where the application is met with objections. Sometimes an application is also supported by other residents, battle lines are drawn!

I have always taken on board both sides of the argument and debated with the Committee accordingly. In complex cases, site visits are arranged and further evidence gathered. Occasionally a compromise is brokered, but often one side is happy and the other disappointed, so I become a hero and a villain at the same time.

Some residents think the Committee allow developers a free reign. Some developers think the Committee are unnecessarily obstructive. The ethos of Darras Hall was always close to my heart. Indeed, in one high profile case, the Committee incurred £25k in legal fees defending the Trust Deed.

It became increasingly obvious during my office that residents had much wider expectations of the committee than was our legal remit. Complaints would come into the office about nuisance neighbours, overgrown hedges, dangerous footpaths, blocked drains and potholes. None of these are within the jurisdiction of the Committee.

However, it was decided to follow up some persistent complaints on behalf of residents. Such was the outcry with regard to the condition of the roads and pavements that a working group was set up with NCC. One member of our Committee is now in regular communication with the county council with regard to this and I feel his efforts are beginning to bear fruit. Yes of course, it's inconvenient whilst the work is taking place, but no pain no gain. Please don't complain!

My departure obviously means there is a vacancy on the

Committee; in fact there are now a number of vacancies, as the Covid situation has meant previous departees haven't yet been replaced. So, any resident who feels they have something to offer, please contact the Estate Office now. Your committee needs you!

Anyway, life moves on and I must carve out a new one for myself away from Darras Hall. Thanks to the office staff who have worked hard and conscientiously and the Committee members who have worked with me over the last six years and thanks to all those residents who have supported me over the years; yes there are a few!

Thank you and goodbye.

Andrew Mate

Outgoing Chairman, Darras Hall Estate Committee

Support our local shops

I think everyone will agree that all our local shops in Merton Way, the Main Street and the Broadway did an excellent job in looking after us in lockdown.

It is sad that some of the shops have reported to me that their business has died down drastically since lockdown was lifted.

Please keep supporting your local shops as they came to our aid in a crisis but they need our help and support today.

Christine Greenwell

Station Cottages, Ponteland

Are these your glasses?

At 2pm on Monday August 3rd I found a black pair of bifocal spectacles on the grass at the entrance to Old Station Court in Darras Hall.

They appear to be a new and expensive pair of glasses. I took them to HB Opticians on Broadway and staff think they may have been purchased there.

If anyone believes the spectacles belong to them, please call me on (01661) 820448. I would very much like to return them to their owner.

Evelyn Robinson

Old Station Court, Darras Hall

November issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the November issue is Monday October 19th. Door to door distribution will be from Monday November 2nd to Friday November 6th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the November issue. Please visit ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views for online issues and all 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.

What's on...

St Mary's Church

From Sunday October 11th there will be 9.30am and 11am Parish Eucharist services at St Mary's and a 4pm Sunday Evening service at Holy Saviour, Milbourne. On Wednesday October 14th at 10am Holy Communion service will resume at St Mary's followed by private prayer from 11am-12 noon. These services are subject to restricted numbers; for further information on services or the Parish Centre contact the Parish Office at office@pontelandstmary.co.uk or on weekdays from 9am-11am on (01661) 824470.

Ponteland Senior Gentleman's Club

Club activities resume with a Zoom online meeting on Monday October 12th at 2.30pm. There will be three ten minute talks - Bill Schardt speaking on 'Pythagorus', Steve Cox on 'Other people's flight decks' and David Tanner on 'The Yemen as it was'.

Nominations sought for Community Partnership

Ponteland Community Partnership's 2020 AGM will be held via a Zoom meeting on Wednesday November 18th at 7pm. Nominations for membership of the Executive Council for the posts of

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer and for the Executive Committee should be submitted no later than October 28th. Applications can be made via the website contact page at pontelandcommunitypartnership.com

Ponteland Rotary

Rotarians in Ponteland are holding their meetings online using Zoom every two weeks on a Tuesday morning. Visit rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=155

Ponteland Village WI

Plans to restart our meetings have had to be shelved due to new Covid rules, but there is still a lot going on for members of Ponteland Village WI. The committee has been holding online meetings and is planning to launch a new subgroup for members to meet in small, socially-distanced groups. We are sending a monthly newsletter with local information, quizzes, tips and ideas. The walking group has restarted, with small groups enjoying local, socially-distanced walks, the Cycling for Softies group is helping members to keep fit and the book club is enjoying Zoom meetings. For updates and information, email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or find us on Facebook.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

The monthly talks at Kirkley Hall remain cancelled, but the safety situation is being reviewed and the resumption of scheduled speakers will happen when safe.

Ponteland Methodist Church

Ponteland Methodist Church is closed until further notice, but its YouTube services are available each week. Search YouTube for 'Newcastle West Methodist Circuit'. A monthly magazine, Cornerstone, is published on the church's website at ponteland-methodistchurch.org.uk. Contact anncooperx@gmail.com or Rev Jona Sewell on (01661) 822057.

Ponteland U3A

Due to the current Covid-19 situation, meetings at St Mary's Parish Centre are cancelled. However, thanks to Zoom, members can enjoy monthly talks, and it is hoped talks will take place at 2pm on the first Wednesday of each month. For more information visit u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or call (01661) 824953. Talks are available for members and non-members.

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Regional Building Northern Project / Community Update



Welcome to the project and community update

Over the past month, we have continued to make good progress having closed-out the teaching wings for both schools. The Crescent and Leisure Centre areas have progressed at pace and are on programme for completion by mid-October. Final testing, commissioning and training will then be completed in the period up to handover in early November 2020.

September has seen good progress to internal and external areas with finishing works well advanced throughout the site. Both Primary and Secondary School teaching wings have been completed, along with the shared areas to the Crescent. The public areas of the building have progressed well, with the final fix operations and equipment installations at an advanced stage. October will see the completion of all other areas including the remaining final testing and commissioning of the building's systems and equipment.

The Pool Hall has made really good progress through September with the finishes well advanced, pool deck tiling completed, wall tiling completed and the pool liner sheets installed to both pools. The installation of the height adjustable floor has also been completed ahead of the planned filling of the pools over the weekend of 3rd and 4th October. The Aqua Play equipment has been installed in parallel with the completion of the pools. Final testing and commissioning operations are due to be completed by mid-October.

The external areas have progressed well through September, aided by the good weather that we have had. Hard landscaping finishes are complete to the Crescent Park areas and around the Primary School. There has also been good progress to the northern section of the new southern car park and the new play park to the end of the public pedestrian bridgeway, which were both completed during September.

Works have continued well to the public pedestrian bridgeway, with the gabion basket walls to the overbridge at the Primary School being completed ahead of the final regrading of the path and installation of the dressed surface.

Works have advanced well to the new sports pitches across the Fairney Burn. The structural base to the 3G sports pitch and the multi-use games areas is complete with the pitch surfaces progressing for completion during October, ready for the opening of the campus later in the year.

Ponteland Schools & Leisure Development

Site Address:
Kier Construction
Callerton Lane
Ponteland
NE20 9EG

Site Contacts:
Roddy Graham
Project Leader
07849 098786



Andy Todhunter
Operations Lead
07773 243081



Kier Website:
www.kier.co.uk



What works will progress in the next 4 weeks?

- Complete final snagging to the Crescent shared areas.
- Complete internal finishes and final snagging to Crescent public areas
- Complete finishes works and commissioning to the Pool Hall.
- Complete specialist Spa commissioning works.
- Complete final landscaping works to the Bridgeway.
- Complete construction of the external artificial and natural Sports Pitches.
- Complete External Works and Soft Landscaping to all areas.
- Complete and Handover of the Campus to NCC.



We value your feedback and comments or questions on this project, please email: ksne.ponteland@kier.co.uk

Listed buildings from old police HQ going on sale

Listed buildings from Northumbria Police's former Ponteland headquarters will go on sale to house buyers later this year after being refurbished by Bellway.

The Newcastle-based housebuilder is converting a collection of Grade II listed cottages and the Superintendent's House into 22 homes.

Arcing around a large area of green open space, the renovated properties will form the centrepiece of Bellway's Ottermead at Jameson Manor development, which is part of a wider scheme of 275 homes being delivered by a consortium of Bellway and Ashberry Homes on the former police site.

The former force HQ, off North Road, opened in 1981 but the 57-acre site was sold to Bellway for £21m in 2018. Although the listed buildings are being retained, most of the other buildings were demolished after being deemed no longer fit for purpose.

The proceeds from the land sale have been re-invested in local policing and the force has moved into a new headquarters to the south of the site.

The listed buildings date back to well before the site was occupied by the police, with the cottages being built in the early 1900s to house children away from the Newcastle workhouses.



Computer-generated images of the listed buildings at Ottermead at Jameson Manor

Bellway will be opening a new sales office at the development in early October, ahead of the renovated listed buildings being released onto the market. A total of 61 newly built homes have already been purchased and 24 are now occupied. For more information visit bellway.co.uk.



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Entries still open for the inaugural 'Virtual Duck Races'

Entries are still being taken for the 'Virtual Duck Races' event being held this weekend.

The usual event which takes place each September in Ponteland Park had to be cancelled due to social distancing requirements.

But organisers at Rotary Ponteland were determined to find another way for the popular charitable fundraiser to take place, so they devised a virtual format.

Everyone will be able to watch the recording of the virtual races this Sunday, October 4th via the club's website at rotaryponteland.org.uk and Facebook page.

There were also stands in Waitrose car park and elsewhere in the village during the past two weekends to make cash or cashless donations and register for Duck Race tickets.

Lead organiser John Cooper said: "Local businesses have been quick to support us by sponsoring the duck races and by donating to our charity partner, Dragonfly Cancer Trust.

"The public can be directly involved in our event by registering for free tickets by emailing duckrace@outlook.com and each household registering will get an electronic ticket to cover all five races with cash prizes for the winning ducks.

"The races are free to enter this year but we are asking the public to support us by donating to the Dragonfly Cancer Trust."

In addition to the duck races there are two competitions for children. Pupils at all local primary schools have been invited to take part in a design and build a boat competition. Children are also being challenged to 'Spot the ducks' at shops and businesses in Merton Way, Main Street and Broadway.

Flower Show also going virtual

Meanwhile organisers of Ponteland Flower Show are delighted with the response to the virtual version of the popular annual event.

They received 222 entries from 50 people in 81 classes, with a good range of entries across all sections except cookery.

Show Chairman David Goodchild said: "I am delighted with the response. People have clearly been very busy during the lockdown - not just tending their fruit, flowers and vegetables, but also creating excellent craft items and polishing their photographic skills.

"The most popular classes were for dahlias and runner beans but there was a total of 222 entries from 50 entrants including eight children and a beautiful rainbow made from woollen pompoms by residents at Ponteland Manor.

"A special class for a lockdown project illustrated a wide range of interests from a garden pond to painted stones and home made cocktails.

"Congratulations to everyone and thanks for taking part to help to keep the Flower Show going in these very strange times."

The entries are now all with the judges and the results and winning entries will be published on the Show's website at pontelandflowershow.co.uk and on their Facebook page. Winners will also be sent a certificate by email.

Buy your poppy wreaths now

By Karen Overbury

Organisations and individuals wanting to pay respect to those lost in the two World Wars and other conflicts are being urged to order poppy wreaths now.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has forced Ponteland Town Council to cancel next month's Remembrance Day parade and service, but councillors are keen that the village still remembers the sacrifices other made.

Those leaving wreaths are asked to lay them privately at the war memorial between Sunday November 8th and Saturday November 15th and to supply the Town Council with a photograph if possible. A photograph of all the wreaths

will be taken after this date.

Due to high demand, the Royal British Legion is unable to guarantee delivery for orders received after October 24. Wreaths can be ordered from britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/ways-to-give/shop/wreaths or by calling 0345 845 1945.

Councillors are also planning displays of knitted and crochet poppies for November. More than 1,000 poppies have already been handed in. Patterns are available on the Town Council website and completed poppies can be delivered to the Council offices from Mon-Thurs 9.30am-1pm.



Hospice shop reopens after makeover



By Lucy Weeks

A Ponteland charity shop which supports the valuable work of a local palliative care provider has reopened after a makeover.

Tynedale Hospice at Home opened its shop on Merton Way in 2014. Known for its high end clothing and top quality homewares, it has since become a firm favourite with both the local community and visitors alike.

But it was overdue a makeover. Space had always been a problem, with little room for manoeuvring around the shop floor, and social distancing proving difficult.

The shop closed for two weeks during August and new flooring was laid, walls given a fresh coat of paint and a deep clean undertaken before restocking. The shop floor has also been opened up, allowing people to browse safely and with ease.



Ponteland Shop Manager Sandra Cairns and the new layout.

The works followed similar refurbishments of the charity's Hexham outlets during the lockdown closure period, reflecting the style and feel of the newly opened Prudhoe shop.

Ponteland Shop Manager Sandra Cairns said: "The response from customers, old and new, has been amazing. The shop has always been popular, but now it's really something special. Everything is so clean and fresh; it feels more like a



boutique than a charity shop."

Tynedale Hospice at Home provides end of life care in the patient's own home, a hospital transport service and pre and post bereavement support for children, adults and families living in Tynedale, West Northumberland and Ponteland.

The charity shops bring in a third of the income needed to continue to provide its services to local people, so every penny spent in store really does count.



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Luxury kitchen and bathroom showroom opens in Ponteland

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The bathroom side is headed up by Armani-Roca, with other premium brands such as Matki, Kaldewei, Swadling Brassware and Silverdale Bathrooms.

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