

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Tennis coach hangs up
racket after 22 years

Hollywood actress supports
photographer's new book

Great Darras Run raises
£2,000 for hospice

New £43m school and leisure scheme opens

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'The Great Darras Run' raises more than £2,000 for hospice



Dave Taylor refused to let the cancellation of the Great North Run stop him fundraising for a Newcastle hospice.

For he donned his famous fridge and took on a half marathon with a difference - a 13.1 mile course around Darras Hall.

Dave, who works as a chef at St Oswald's Hospice, has been an unmistakable Great North Run regular for many years – taking on the route from Newcastle's central motorway to South Shields seafront with a fridge strapped to his back.

After hearing the 40th event was cancelled, he signed up to do the virtual version instead. Starting and finishing at The Blackbird Inn on North Road, Ponteland, Dave completed 'The Great Darras Run' with seven friends.

The group's challenge was in memory of a patient that Dave had first met at the hospice 19 years ago, who he and colleague Darren Harvey had pushed in a wheelchair along the iconic route.

With Rebecca's memory at the forefront of their minds, the team managed to complete their latest half marathon in three hours. Residents cheered them on and made donations in support. The team's current fundraising total stands at just over £2,000, with money still coming in.

Dave, from Darras Hall, said: "I'm buzzing, honestly I can't believe it - I am really pleased with how it turned

out. I haven't ran with the fridge for many years now but it was a great team effort. Each member helped motivate me along the route and we finished the 13.1 miles in just over the three hours.

"The community spirit around Ponteland is incredible; people driving by were stopping to donate to our challenge and it was a real buzz to see. We raised over £2,000 - I'm very happy with that and I know how much it will help the hospice."

Danielle Harvey, fundraising manager at St Oswald's added: "We can't thank Dave and the other runners enough for taking on such a mammoth challenge. To complete the route in three hours is impressive anyway, never mind when carrying a fridge on your back.

"Seeing the people of Ponteland come together to support us in this incredible way is very heart warming. Thank you very much to the team for running, and all of the people who supported, cheered and donated along the way."

So what's next for Dave? He said: "Completing this challenge has given me the drive to think about my next one - I'm feeling good physically and know that I can push myself further and do more to help the hospice."



To donate to 'The Great Darras Run' text FRIDGE to 70470 to donate £5. Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message. To find out more about the work of St Oswald's Hospice visit stoswaldsuk.org.



Firefighter David Mack (right) during the road traffic collision training.

Third time lucky for new fire service recruit

It's third time lucky for Ponteland man David Mack, after he finally secured his dream job as a firefighter.

Having applied to join the fire service twice before, he was delighted to be selected as one of the first batch of recruits in 40 years to be trained in-house by Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.

The 45-year-old, who has previously worked as a printer, embosser as well as running local business 'Paint & Trim' refurbishing automotive paintwork with wife Sarah, has completed his initial eight week course at Pegswood Fire Station.

He will be stationed at West Hartford for the remaining 28 months of his training.

Although the service regularly trains on-call firefighters, historically its full time firefighters have been trained at other fire and rescue services across England and at the old Scottish Fire Services Training School in Gullane since 1980.

But this year Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service decided to train the next generation of the county's firefighters in-house, taking on ten new recruits.

Group Manager for Learning and Development Lee Buckingham said: "We have an incredible amount of expertise in the fire service and fantastic facilities and we are excited to train 10 new trainees from the communities of Northumberland.

"Each and every recruit will have a different reason for choosing to become a firefighter, but they will be united in their training which will ultimately help prevent incidents, save lives in their communities and help make Northumberland safer."

Firefighter Mack, of Limestone Lane, added: "I didn't want to work in a windowless factory running the same machines any more so I applied for something bigger and better, a completely unpredictable job working with the community, making a difference and giving something back.

"I had applied to join the fire service twice before and having been involved in a lot of work with the firefighters' charity I was encouraged to try again by the staff within the various brigades I have worked with.

"One of my uncles passed away a couple of years ago, Bob Robson, who

was retired from the retained service down in Newton Aycliffe and had served his community for many years.

"Now that I've finished the training course I am stationed at West Hartford and learning more every day. Going into my first house fire in full breathing apparatus there was a certain amount of nervousness and excitement, but once you jump off the appliance you remember all the training and drills and it all just falls into place."

Northumberland Fire Authority Chair Coun John Riddle, Cabinet member for Housing, Planning and Resilience, said he wished all of the new recruits the best of luck in their new careers: "They have already shown us they have the skills and commitment to succeed and I know through their training they will quickly learn what makes being a firefighter one of the most rewarding paths you can choose to take in your professional life."



Chief Executive returns from suspension after Council Leader removed from office

The Chief Executive of Northumberland County Council has returned from suspension after a new leader was voted in to replace Ponteland councillor Peter Jackson.

Daljit Lally OBE is back at County Hall after going "on a period of extended leave" following two emails she sent in early August which raised concerns about Advance Northumberland, the council's development division, and the wider operation of the council.

Writing to all councillors, she had said she had "significant whistle blowing concerns" and remained "very concerned about my welfare and that of my exec/senior team and council business".

Coun Jackson strenuously denied further allegations, made in the first email to Cabinet members, of bias and potential conflict on his part due to an alleged personal relationship, as "completely without foundation or evidence".

The Ponteland South with Heddon ward councillor 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 vote 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.

Calling the no confidence motion, Labour group leader Coun Susan Dungworth alleged breaches of the whistleblowing policy and major personal and professional data breaches which had left the authority's reputation in shreds and made it "the laughing stock of the region".

Longhorsley Conservative Glen Sanderson was voted in as the new council leader at a subsequent full council meeting on September 23rd, announcing Coun Jones had returned to her previous Cabinet post.

NCC would not comment on the outcome of a formal disciplinary process which accompanied Ms Lally's suspension, and would only say: "We can confirm that Chief Executive, Daljit Lally, will be returning to her role in the Council."



Back at County Hall:
Chief Executive
Daljit Lally OBE



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Don't wait before reporting incidents or suspicious activity



By PC Phil Oliver, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer

Man arrested for indecent exposure

The East Tynedale neighbourhood team led the investigation into reports of a man exposing himself in the area of Ponteland Park. Enquiries made by the team led to the arrest of a man for indecent exposure. The man has been released under investigation and enquiries are still ongoing. If anyone has any further information, please contact the officer in charge of the investigation by email at 3234.northumbria.pnn.police.uk, quoting Incident Reference 863 01/10/20.

Thefts from vehicles

The team has noticed a rise in reports of thefts from parked and unattended motor vehicles in recent weeks across the Darras Hall estate. Residents are being asked to remain vigilant, to ensure vehicles are parked and kept secure with valuables either removed or made secure and out of sight. Residents are also urged to report any suspicious activity to police.

Reporting incidents - we need your help!

The neighbourhood team is urging residents to report any incidents or suspicious activity as soon as possible; we have dealt with a number of incidents recently in which the reports are historic. We want to reassure residents that they can expect

a good response to anything they report which concerns them, but we need to know in a timely manner so as to allow us to allocate resources appropriately and quickly if needed.



It's a fond farewell from me...

Lastly, it is with sadness that I have to announce that I am no longer part of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Team, having transferred to a new role in North Tyneside a few weeks ago. It has been a pleasure to have served the residents of Ponteland. Having previously been a student at the schools and from living in the village, it had always been an intention of mine to serve an area to which I had a close connection to. I wish all the best to the people of Ponteland for the future. I am happy to welcome PC Tom Ward as well as the new Sergeant David Humble and Inspector Garry Neill to the team. PC Ward, pictured, will take over from me as the Ponteland beat manager; Sgt Humble and Insp. Neill are responsible for policing across East Tynedale as a whole. They are just as keen to build close ties with the people who live and work here, so please do get in touch if you have any policing issues you wish to bring to their attention.

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 northernprudhoenptmailbox@northumbria.pnn.police.uk. For any other issues, you can report an incident or provide information via the force website at 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.

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New play area opening on Callerton Lane

A new play area is opening at the beginning of November on Callerton Lane.

The new facility replaces the previous play area that had to be removed as part of the building work for the new schools and leisure centre.

The play area, which has been funded by Northumberland County Council and Ponteland Town Council, includes brand new equipment designed for all ages from 18 months up to 15 years with some suitable for children who are less able bodied.

The play area was installed by Kier as part of the construction work on site and is located just south of the bridleway entrance.

The Town Council would like to thank both Northumberland County Council and Kier for their work on providing the new play area and we hope that users will enjoy this new facility.



ADVERTISING FEATURE

How much is enough to retire: the \$6m question

By David Lamb, Lamb Financial



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A friend of over 40 years said to me recently “Lamby, I’m retiring at 55 and I don’t need a financial adviser to tell me how much I need in my pension for me to retire, because I know how much I need; all I need is enough”.

And my friend was right. All you need is ENOUGH. Enough to give you the lifestyle that you want, without the fear of running out of money, whatever happens.

Most of my clients aren’t really interested in asking is X company better than Y company for pensions or should they be investing in the UK or emerging markets? What they really want to know is the answer that big question: how much is enough?

A friend of mine, Paul Armson, even wrote a book called ‘How Much Is Enough?’ We have a limited number

of free copies available on a first-come first-served basis and if you would like a copy, please email us at laura.fairley@lambfinancial.co.uk.

Whilst ‘How much is enough?’ is a big question, I don’t think it is THE big question - which is ‘for what?’

To know how much is enough, we need to understand what your lifestyle is like now and in the future, so we can calculate your capital and income needs throughout your life to ensure that you have enough money at different stages of your life. As far as we know, we only get once chance at

life, so be had better make sure we make the most of it!

Here’s an interesting question for you: thinking about your lifestyle, on a scale of one to ten, where one is the most important thing and ten is the least important thing, where would you place money on that scale?

Personally (and there is no right or wrong answer this question) I think money is at number nine.

Over the next few months, I will explain my conclusions and discuss the major factors that make up your lifestyle and how money fits into it.

Film director and UN Refugee Agency Special Envoy Angelina Jolie listens to a 90-year-old woman at Ja Mai Kaung Baptist refugee camp in Myanmar.



Award-winning Ponteland photographer marks 50 year career with new book and exhibition

Award-winning Ponteland photographer Tom Stoddart is marking his 50th anniversary with a book and exhibition supported by famous Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie. Here he tells Pont News about the inspiration behind both.

It's 50 years in December since I started work as a photographer aged 17 at the Berwick Advertiser after leaving Seahouses Secondary Modern School.

Since then I've covered events and assignments in over 60 countries for national and international publications such as Time, Newsweek, Stern and the Sunday Times Magazine.

I wanted to mark the 50th anniversary with a book and exhibition and Extraordinary Women which runs at Side Gallery in Newcastle until mid-December is an unashamed homage to the women that I've photographed over the years.

Having an exhibition at the Side Gallery is a great privilege for me because I live in the North East, so I'm really a big fan of what they do and the exhibitions they've had there. It's a real honour to be on the walls of my hometown in such a highly regarded and prestigious gallery space.

After such a long career it was obviously difficult to choose which images to include and what to leave out, so the editing process took quite a few months but we ended up with 208 pictures in the book and around 80 in the exhibition.

In the past I've worked for Angelina Jolie photographing

some of her foundation projects in Asia. I'm delighted that she wanted to write the foreword in the book because she also is an extraordinary woman.

People see her as an actor and a director, but I've seen her, first hand, working in refugee camps and spending long hours with women and children talking about their situation. I have a lot of time for people like that. She could easily sit in Hollywood and not do anything – like a lot of them do – but she's trying to make the world a better place.

Ordinary women are capable of extraordinary things. When a crisis engulfs a community

it's the women who turn to face the challenges head on. Their love of family and never surrender attitude drives them on to survive the miserable cruelty of conflicts, political persecution, natural disasters and health emergencies.

In April 1987 I saw Haji Achmed Ali sacrifice her life attempting to leave the besieged Bourj el Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut in a desperate attempt to buy food for her starving family.

The 22-year-old Palestinian was shot in the face and stomach by Syrian backed Amal militia gunmen as she walked alone down the Path of Death. Her courage made

Tom Stoddart's new book *Extraordinary Women: Images of Courage, Endurance and Defiance*



a huge impact on me and also on my brave Sunday Times colleague, Marie Colvin, who later became one of the most famous foreign correspondents in the world before also being callously murdered by the hand of Syria.

Arriving in Sarajevo in 1992 I photographed proud, stylishly dressed women wearing pearls arguing over the price of foraged dock leaves in the market place.

The women made soup from the leaves and fed their children, menfolk and elderly family members first, then themselves. The lack of food and constant sprinting to avoid mortars and sniper fire caused Sarajevo's women on average to lose 30 pounds in weight. They called it being on the Radovan Karadžić diet after the Bosnian Serbian leader whose surrounding forces tormented their city from the hills.

In Sniper Alley I saw countless acts of courage and humanity by women shielding their children and helping each other across deadly intersections. The heroism was humbling to witness!

I've been privileged to have a ringside view of incredibly joyful times too, such as November 9th 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell and 27th April 1994, when voters elected Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first black president. These momentous events gave freedom to

millions of strong, modest women, quietly determined to build a better future for themselves and their families.

Sadly a recurring theme in my career has been documenting lines of refugees fleeing ethnic hatred or political barbarism. But again, amidst such fear and chaos, it's the women and girls who protect the weak, bear the weight, build the fires and feed the hungry.

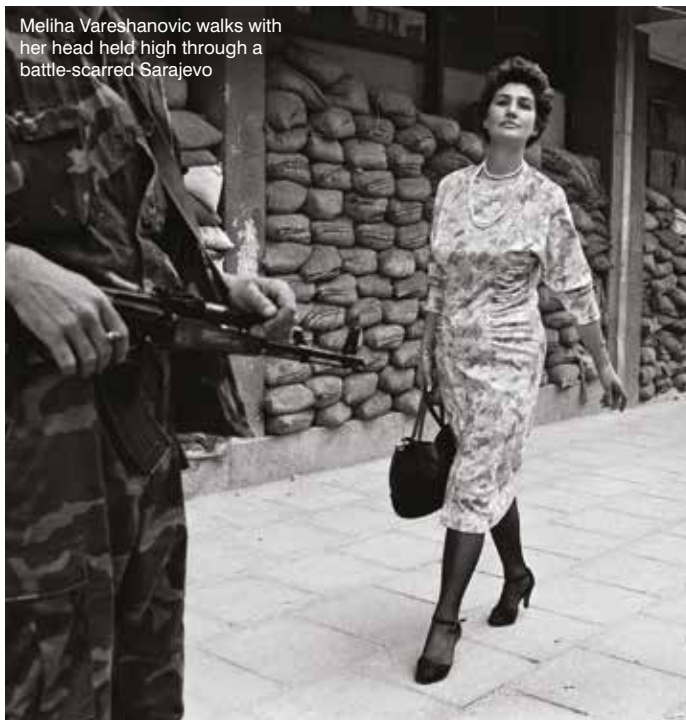
Eleanor Roosevelt was so right when she said: "A woman is like a tea bag; you never know how strong it is until it's in hot water."

What must it feel like as a mother to load everything you own on your shoulders and set off to trek miles across deserts or mountains, or to pay a criminal thousands of dollars to transport your terrified children across a sea in a fragile boat to seek asylum in a strange land?

Many images in the book and exhibition hold strong memories for me, but the photograph of Meliha Vareshanovic, walking with her head held high wearing her heels and jewellery, through a battle-scarred Sarajevo neighbourhood has a special place in my heart.

In 250th of a second, Meliha's bravery, defiance, beauty and soul are captured and exposed in one powerful frame and for a photographer it doesn't get any better than that.

Meliha Vareshanovic walks with her head held high through a battle-scarred Sarajevo



Extraordinary Women: Images of Courage, Endurance and Defiance by Tom Stoddart is published Oct 1 by ACC Art Books. To buy from the publisher, email uksales@accartbooks.com. An exhibition from the book is at Side Gallery, Newcastle, Sept 26-Dec 13. To book tickets visit eventbrite.com/e/tom-stoddart-general-admission-tickets-120496647717

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Thanks to fundraisers and a Good Samaritan and an invitation to comment on a national consultation on pavement parking in this month's postbag...

Thanks to all for supporting fundraising after vandal attack

In early September, Henry's Hut was once again the victim of mindless criminal damage and once news of this broke, I thought it was time we helped them out.

I set up a GoFundMe page and the community responded fantastically and we've been able to raise over £1,300 in donations (online and offline) for Henry's Hut and The Den to increase their security.

It's a fantastic business that Sandra and Keith run for local families and children and it's great to be able to give them something back following such a disappointing act of mindless vandalism.

A heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated or sent messages of support!

Neil Douglass

Queensway, Darras Hall

Have your say on pavement parking

In this forum and others there has been comment about the practice of parking vehicles on pavements.

The Department for Transport is seeking views on how to address this topic and is running an open consultation until November 22nd.

Those who are interested in taking part can do so at gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking/pavement-parking-options-for-change (Google: pavement parking consultation).

Peter Watson

Meadowvale, Darras Hall

Thanks to runner for helping me during medical emergency

On Tuesday September 29th my wife became ill and I called for medical help and was told to get emergency equipment from the Methodist Church car park.

At 82 years old my progress was slow but I passed a group of runners at the entrance to the old sports centre and sought their help. One of them volunteered and in no time had the equipment to my house.

Paramedics had arrived by this time and whilst the equipment was not needed the actions of the runner was an act of public service for which I will be eternally grateful.

Thank you to that runner from my wife Joyce and me - I am pleased to say she made a fine recovery.

Brian Scott

Mayfair Gardens, Ponteland

December issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the December issue is Monday November 16th. Door to door distribution will be from Monday November 30th to Friday December 4th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the December 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.

Hall remains open during Covid crackdown



Trustees at Ponteland Memorial Hall have issued a reminder that the venue remains open for a wide range of activities.

Community halls in 'High Tier 2' areas are allowed to run a number of physical and educational activities, providing support to vulnerable people, charitable and voluntary work.

They have to be Covid secure, providing hand washing soap or sanitiser, social spacing, masks and one way exits and entrances. For more information visit pontelandmemorialhall.com or contact the hall via Facebook or by calling (01661) 822603.

What's on...

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. TBC: Nostalgic views of the North – John Moreels, November 4th. For more information visit u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or call (01661) 824953. Talks are available for members and non-members.

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 are invited until Monday November 9th. Visit: pontelandcommunitypartnership.com

The Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle

Margaret Bozic MBE will give her illustrated talk about the history of the building and what it offers to everyone at present at 6.30pm on 'Zoom' on Thursday November 19th. The Lit. & Phil was founded in 1793 and moved to its present premises in 1825. Margaret Bozic has for last six years been a Board Member of the Lit and Phil Newcastle, a Trustee of the Tyne and Wear Buildings Preservation Trust and a Trustee of Sherburn House Charity. She is a retired chartered surveyor, having worked as a Ratings Caseworker in the Valuations Agency in Washington, and was awarded the MBE in 2003. If you would like to join the presentation please register your interest with mike@brownznponteland.co.uk.

Ponteland Village WI

Covid restrictions mean that Ponteland Village WI will not be meeting for the rest of the year. However, there is still a lot going on for members. The committee has been holding

online meetings, planning events such as a Zoom book club, and is planning to launch a new, befriending subgroup. A monthly newsletter includes local information, quizzes, tips and ideas. For updates and information, email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or find us on Facebook - Ponteland Village WI.

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 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.

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£43m learning and leisure scheme opens its doors

More than 2,000 children will be welcomed to their brand new school, which opens its doors this week after the half term break.

The £43m learning and leisure scheme includes a 1,600-pupil secondary school, 420-pupil primary school and 52-place nursery, opening on Tuesday November 3rd.

Pupils from Ponteland High School and Ponteland Primary School are relocating to the new facility, with students from Richard Coates School moving into the vacated primary school building before Christmas.

The new secondary school has a 110-seat lecture theatre, 270-seat main hall, 15 science labs, an art and technology suite, music and drama suite, five IT

suites, 49 standard classrooms and a PE studio/gym.

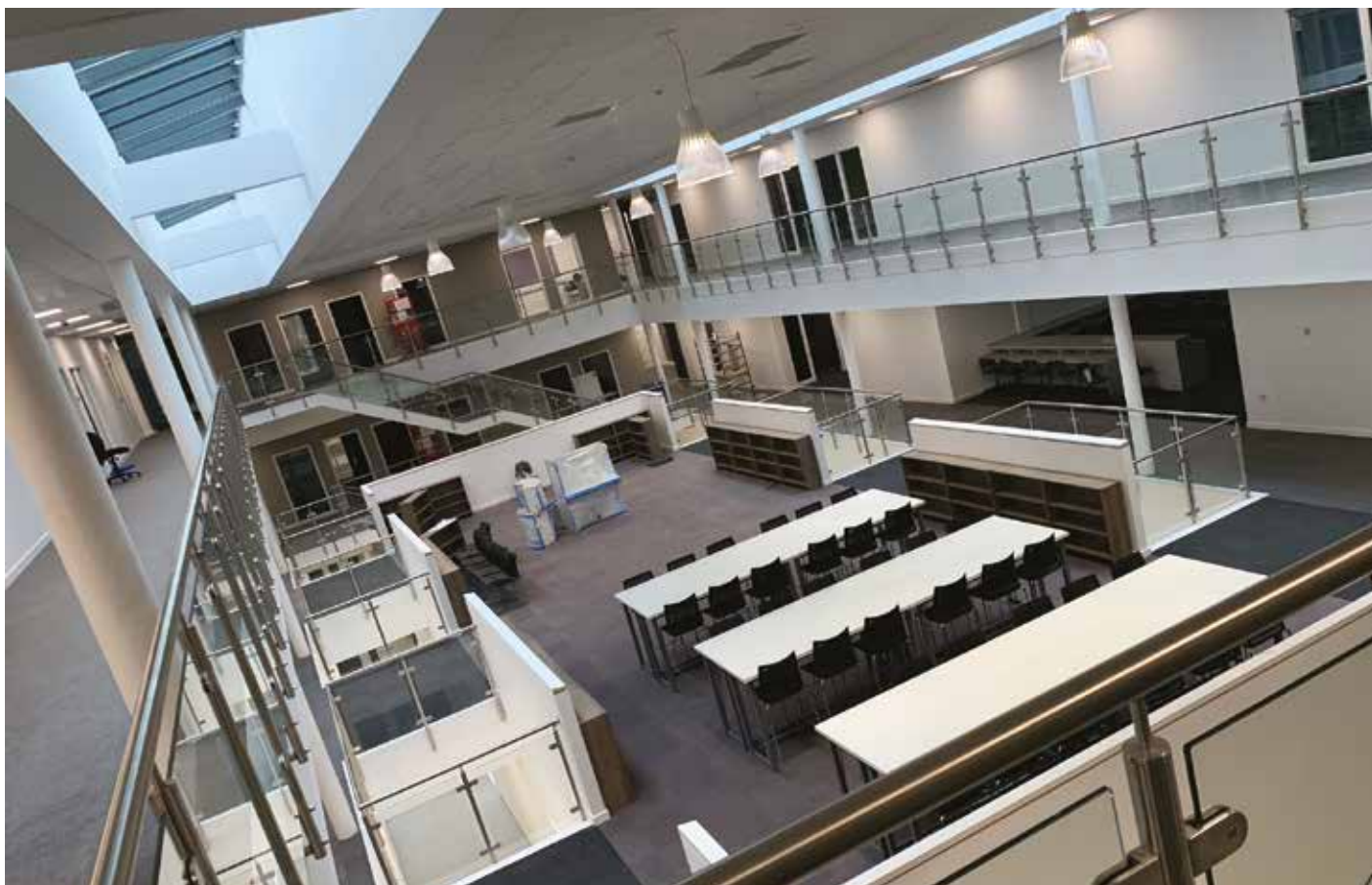
Shared facilities which will be used by both the schools and the local community include a four-court sports hall with indoor cricket nets, 3G pitch, two hard court multi-use games areas (MUGAs), grass pitches and changing rooms.

The leisure centre, which boasts a six-lane swimming pool with height adjustable floor, a learner pool including aquaplay, a spa and a gym, virtual cycling studio as well as a soft play area, clip 'n' climb activity centre, a library, café

and sports bar, will welcome visitors from Monday November 9th.

Kieran McGrane, headteacher of Ponteland High School, said: "I have been involved in this schools and leisure project since it began in October 2016, and I am really looking forward to moving in.

"The wait has certainly been worth it as the secondary school is magnificent and will be a wonderful environment for our students and staff. Schools are about people, not buildings, but when you can marry up great staff and superb students with a building to match then you have



Front cover: Kieran McGrane, headteacher of Ponteland High School, and Lynn Blain, headteacher of Ponteland Primary School, at the entrance to the new school and leisure complex. Photo by Barry Pells.

the prospect of something very special.

“As a school, we are incredibly grateful to Northumberland County Council for their foresight, ambition and generous funding to secure this flagship development and also to Kier for making such a success of the original design by Faulkner Brown architects.”

He added that the new building will provide more scope to manage pupil movement during Covid as corridors are wider with very high ceilings and therefore have more space and ventilation. A one-way system is being

implemented on each main floor and designate staircases as either ‘up only’ or ‘down only’.

The multi-million-pound project is one of the county council’s largest ever capital programmes, being part of a wider £142m investment in Northumberland schools and an additional £65m countywide investment programme to upgrade and transform sport and leisure facilities.

Hailing the scheme, Coun Guy Renner-Thompson, Cabinet Member responsible for Children’s Services, said it would

bring “incredible benefits” for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of children and young people, giving them access to “outstanding learning facilities”.

Leisure charity Active Northumberland will manage the new leisure centre. Acting Chief Executive Mark Warnes said: “We have a fantastic team of friendly, knowledgeable and experienced fitness coaches ready to welcome and help local residents of all ages and fitness levels on their wellness journey. The leisure centre is without a doubt one of the best in the north east; we are very excited at what is to come!”



Pele Trust is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) developed through the formal collaboration of six schools in and around the Ponteland area. The schools came together out of a strong sense of moral purpose and an aspiration to maintain high quality teaching and learning for all of the young people in our schools.

We believe that this is done most effectively by strengthening relationships, recruiting and retaining the best staff and increasing opportunities for meaningful joint working.

Forming Pele Trust has, and will continue to, enable the schools to build on existing partnerships, work closely together and support one another to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils throughout their school career, ideally carrying them on their journey from reception through to GCSE/A-levels.

Forming a MAT has also allowed our schools to capitalise on key benefits, such as sharing best practice, economic support in the form of a centralised financial team, the ability to focus funds

where they are most needed, increased and flexible staffing resources, the opportunity to establish succession planning programmes and, in doing so, retain excellent staff who might otherwise move to other schools.

A MAT model enables Trusts to remain local but also to grow and expand, and support a wider network of schools. Within Pele Trust, we are committed to every school retaining its unique characteristics and maintaining its own local governing body within the overall MAT governance structure; this approach offers headteachers a high degree of autonomy in leading their schools, whilst giving them the freedom to relentlessly focus on improving teaching and learning.

The stated purpose behind the formation of our Trust was:

- To build a learning community, brought together by choice, that enables our schools to support and challenge each other to provide consistently outstanding education whilst offering a stable pathway for students, parents and staff
- To have an influential voice and be instrumental in contributing to the development and enrichment of education in the north-east of England

Partner schools

Pele Trust comprises six schools that include:

- Belsay School
- Darras Hall Primary School
- Heddon St. Andrews Primary School
- Ponteland Primary School
- Richard Coates Primary School
- Ponteland High School



Game, set and match for tennis coach Nick

Former GB senior player Nick Clark is hanging up his racket after more than 20 years as a coach at Ponteland Tennis Club.



Hanging up his racket: tennis coach Nick Clark



Taking over the reins: Team GB bronze medallist Tracy Smith

Nick Clark started coaching in 1998 after a long playing career, having represented Northumberland at county level for 25 years and Great Britain at over-45s in the World Championships and other international competitions. In his early career he also qualified to play in ATP Tour events.

Nick built up a very busy coaching programme at Ponteland Tennis Club and surrounding schools teaching thousands of children and adults over the last 22 years, with some players making it to county, national and even international level.

The club has been rewarded by many junior and senior league wins over the years, alongside the many players who have just learned to play tennis socially and for fitness.

Key achievements have included Nick organising the building and funding of the three floodlit tennis courts at the Middle School and launching the Ponteland Junior Open Tennis Tournament. In its best year it was the largest junior event in the North of England, with 345 players.

He decided to retire this year and Tracy Smith, who has worked alongside Nick for the last four years, is taking over the reins as Head Coach and the new owner of Play Tennis Ponteland.

Paying tribute to his successor, Nick said: "I cannot think of anyone better suited or more dedicated to help people become better players and enjoy tennis than Tracy."

With an equally impressive career, she has been a junior and senior player at club, county, regional, national and international level and coached for 20 years.

Tracy represented Great Britain as a senior in The World Team Championships where she, along with identical twin sister Gillian, won a bronze medal for Team GB. The sisters are also in the Lawn Tennis Association's record books after winning 149 matches out of 150 over 11 years – a national record stretching back 125 years.

She said: "I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank Nick for all his hard work and dedication he's given to Play Tennis Ponteland and Ponteland Tennis Club over the years.

"I most certainly have big shoes to fill but look forward to carrying on the legacy of Play Tennis Ponteland and sharing my enthusiasm for the this great sport at Ponteland Tennis Club. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Nick and wish him all the very best in his well-deserved retirement."

The club's courts remain open to members and visitors subject to all players observing social distancing rules and there should be no spectating. Hand sanitisers are provided and the clubhouse is open only for toilet access; the changing rooms and kitchen are closed. All competition has been abandoned until the restrictions are lifted.

For more information about club membership, contact Membership Secretary Christine Fair at christine4tennis@btinternet.com or Club Chairman Jonathan Heslop at jonathan@nicholsonmorgan.co.uk.

Council leaders join forces to oppose further Covid restrictions

Northumberland County Council has joined all five local authorities in Tyne & Wear and Durham County Council in opposing further Covid restrictions.

A joint statement by all seven council leaders, supported by the North of Tyne Mayor and the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, also called for a stronger package of financial support.

It said: "We are concerned by the suggestion that a decision could be taken nationally to move our region into Alert Level 3, and we strongly oppose this at the current time.

"We are seeing evidence of a flattening of the curve and there is a collective view – shared by all the leaders, Chief Executives and critically our superb Directors of Public Health that, with the public's support, we can make Alert Level 2 work.

"Our thanks to everyone who has done their bit so far, if we are to beat COVID-19 and protect our most vulnerable residents, we need everybody to follow the restrictions in place, avoid gatherings and mixing indoors with other households, and maintain the 'Hands, Face, Space' public health guidance at all times.

"A stronger package of financial support is required for those areas in both Alert Level 2 and 3. Paying two-thirds of salaries will not be enough to protect the jobs of thousands – it should at least match the 80% that was available under furlough, with the minimum wage as the minimum support.

"Such economic support will protect jobs, stop people sliding into poverty and give a much better base from which to quickly rebuild our economy as we come out of the pandemic.

"We firmly believe now is not the time to be moving to Alert Level 3, the evidence does not support this, and the economic consequences will be devastating without further support."

MP welcomes Green Homes Grant scheme

Homeowners in Ponteland are being invited to apply for a new Government scheme funding home improvements which improve energy efficiency.

The Green Homes Grant scheme will make available £1.5bn through vouchers, with the Government funding up to two-thirds of the cost of home improvements up to £5,000. Homeowners with low incomes are eligible for a grant covering the full cost of works up to £10,000.

It is claimed the scheme will improve the energy efficiency of over 600,000 homes across England, cut people's energy bills by up to £600 a year, and support tens of thousands of jobs in green construction.

Improvements covered by the scheme range from under-floor, wall and roof insulation, to the installation of low-carbon heating like heat pumps. Households can also use their voucher for further secondary measures such as double or triple glazing when replacing single glazing. Businesses can also sign up

to take part in the scheme as a green homes grant installer.

As part of the wider package, a further £500m has been assigned for local authorities to provide green home improvements for households with an income of under £30,000. An additional £1bn has been committed to boost the energy efficiency of public buildings, including schools and hospitals, with a further £50m for social housing.

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman said: "This scheme is great news for householders and businesses here in Ponteland and in wider Northumberland. This initiative will both help us to reduce our home energy bills, at the same time as cutting carbon emissions. Taken together, these measures will save millions of tonnes of CO2 and support thousands of jobs across the country."

Council thanks for poppies for Remembrance displays

People who have knitted or crocheted poppies for the Remembrance displays which are located at Coates Green, the sensory garden and in front of the Pele Tower are being thanked by the Town Council.

The authority said the response has been much appreciated and it is very grateful to everyone who gave up their time to knit or crochet.

As reported in previous issues, the Council felt it had no alternative but to

cancel the Remembrance Day parade and service in view of the current crisis and increased local restrictions.

Anyone wishing to purchase a wreath can order them from britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/ways-to-give/shop/wreaths or by calling 0345 845 194 but due to high demand the Royal British Legion is unable to guarantee delivery for orders received after October 24th.

Those laying wreaths are asked to do so between Sunday November 8th and Saturday November 14th. A photograph of all the wreaths will be taken after this date and published in the December issue.



Keen gardeners and crafters ensure the (virtual) show goes on

Green-fingered gardeners and creative crafters refused to allow coronavirus to stop the annual Ponteland Parish Flower Show from going ahead – albeit virtually.

More than 220 entries were received in 81 classes from 50 exhibitors, and organisers said they were “delighted” with the response.

As the 43rd annual event could not be held as usual in the Memorial Hall, a ‘virtual’ show was set up where entrants could send images of their prized produce and handicrafts to a special email address.

From there, entries were assessed by judges working remotely from home, studying the images submitted by entrants via their computers.

Chairman David Goodchild said: “When it became clear that it wouldn’t be practical to have a physical show, the suggestion was made that we invite people to show off their achievements by sending us a photo for our judges to assess.

“Although notice was short, the idea was enthusiastically received and notices were issued via Pont News & Views and social media. The response has been very encouraging.

“People realised that they didn’t need to wait until show day and hope that things

would be looking good; they could choose the best in the garden at any time and send a photo of it. A few people struggled with the technology but help was available. Our judges took to the new concept and said the standard was excellent.

“One disappointment was the shortage of cookery entries. Of course it wouldn’t have been possible for entries to be tasted (a very important part of cookery judging) but classes were restricted to those where judging could be based on visual appearance.

“It’s been a huge task all round and I hope we don’t need to do it again next year but Ponteland Parish Flower Show has carried on undaunted.

“We look forward to seeing you all at our (real) show next year on the second Saturday in September at the Memorial Hall.”

A list of all winning entries will be published on a new show website which once live can be found at pontelandflowershow.co.uk but we have photos showing some of the winning entries here.



Class 17 Three Gladiolus spikes won by Mike Sadler



Class 73 A Scandinavian Gonk from socks (children nine – 14 years) won by Matthew Cassidy



Class 61 Apples culinary, plate of five, as picked, won by Janet McCann

Annual Wheelbarrow Race cancelled

Organisers of Ponteland’s longest running annual event – the Annual Wheelbarrow Race – have expressed their “great sadness and regret” that it has had to be cancelled for New Year’s Day.

David Usher, chairman of the organising committee, said: “This has been a most difficult decision, but we feel that running the race could compromise social distancing and current government guidelines. The race has run for many years and this is the first cancellation for a very long time.

“The cancellation of the race is a blow to our charities, St Oswald’s Hospice and Tynedale Hospice at Home, at a time when they are in desperate need of funds to continue their very worthwhile work. We hope that those friends who have supported the race will continue to help these very worthwhile charities.”

Anyone wishing to donate can do so via: stoswaldsuk.org/get-involved/support-us/make-a-donation and tynedalehospice.com/donate.

Mr Usher added: “On a more positive note, we fully expect to run the race in 2022 and suggest to those competitors they continue their training regime!”



Class 91 Any other craft. Not a winner but from a group at Ponteland Manor as a tribute to all key workers.



Lucy, nine, winner of the 'spot the duck' competition.



Ponteland Scouts cub Ross, eight, winner of the 'build a boat' competition, is pictured with John Muir, Ponteland Rotary President and Scout Leader Ian Maloney.



Rotary Ponteland President John Muir hands the cheque to Sarah Hogg, Fundraiser at Dragonfly Cancer Trust.

Virtual duck race raises £1,200 for children's cancer charity

Rotary Ponteland have pulled off their first ever Virtual Duck Race – and raised £1,200 for charity to boot!

Five virtual duck races and a virtual business boat race were staged and broadcast live on YouTube on Sunday October 4th.

Race organiser John Cooper said: "We wanted to engage with the local community as much as possible. So, alongside our online races, we asked local schoolchildren to enter our 'design and build a boat' competition.

"In addition, Rotary members invited shops in Ponteland to display a plastic

yellow duck in their shop windows. We were then able to run a 'spot the duck' competition for youngsters in the village."

Commenting on the success of the event, Rotary President John Muir added: "The main aim of our event was to raise money for charity. Our chosen partner this year was The Dragonfly Cancer Trust. We are grateful to the local businesses and the people of Ponteland who, through their generosity have helped us to raise £1,200."

A cheque for the money raised was handed over to Sarah Hogg, Senior Fundraiser for the Dragonfly Cancer Trust, by John in Ponteland Park on October 8th.



Rotary Ponteland Secretary Peter Tincombe, President John Muir and Viv Muir.

Rotary volunteers hold combined litter pick and bulb planting day

A small group of volunteers from Rotary Ponteland carried out a combined litter pick and bulb planting exercise on Rotary Way.

The event on Sunday October 11th followed a similar successful clean-up organised by the Club in June, and there are plans for another next Spring.

A number of plastic sacks were filled with a variety of rubbish - mainly discarded cans, bottles and fast food packaging - using equipment loaned from Ponteland Town Council.

Combined with the litter pick was the planting of purple crocuses, provided by Rotary Ponteland, at the Rotary Way road signs to mark World Polio Day on October 24th. Three thousand crocus bulbs are also being distributed for planting in the grounds of our local primary schools.

Anyone wishing to volunteer for future litter picks should contact the club at info@rotaryponteland.org.uk.

Increase in Covid-19 cases forces changes to GP practice services

Patients at Ponteland Medical Group are being advised of changes to services in response to the local rise in Covid-19 cases.

The new arrangements include the front door to the practice remaining locked, with a buzzer system now used to gain access.

On pressing for attention, a receptionist will come to the door, check your temperature, ask you two screening questions and welcome you in. If you have a face-to-face appointment with a clinician, they will probably ask you to wait outside in your car on arrival.

The clinician will then call you and meet you at the front door and check your temperature in the same way. It's likely that they will have asked you the

screening questions already since most of the people we're seeing face-to-face will have had a recent remote consultation.

The practice is also once again making sure that some of its staff work from home, to ensure continuity in your care in the unlikely event that a number of its staff fall ill with Covid-19 at the same time. This means telephone consultations with clinicians will often be carried out from their own home, routed through the practice's main phone system.

The Group is practising social distancing at work as well

as wearing PPE in all public areas, including when seeing any patients face-to-face too, to reduce the risk of infection.

However, PMG wants to reassure patients that it is still seeing patients at the surgery and doing home visits where needed.

Dr Matt Thomas said: "There has been comment in the press about GP surgeries not seeing patients face-to-face. Please rest assured that we continued to see patients at the health centre and in their home if required throughout lockdown and we continue to do so.

"We have, however, been in contact with patients much more by phone, on video consulting platforms and via the eConsult system accessible via our website. We will see people face-to-face, but for obvious reasons we're keen to be in touch with you all as much as possible remotely when that's safe and acceptable to you."

Patients eligible for a flu vaccination are also being encouraged to book in if they have received a text alert from the practice.

For more information visit: ponteland.northumbria.nhs.uk or call (01661) 825513.

Local Plan hearings being held virtually on YouTube

The next stage in the completion of a Local Plan for Northumberland started on October 20th when Phase 2 public examination hearings began.

The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in May last year, and the next stage is this public 'examination' by an independent planning inspector.

Susan Heywood BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI was appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out the examination, and she ran Phase 1 hearings in October/November last year and in February 2020.

Phase 2 hearings were due to take place earlier this year, but were delayed due to Covid-19. They are now being held virtually on October 20-22 and 27-29 and November 10-12 and 17-19, from 10am to 3.30pm, and being live-streamed at youtube.com/user/NorthumberlandTV.

The local plan includes the planning policies that will guide and determine future planning applications in Northumberland, details the scale and distribution of new development, and includes land allocations and designations.

After the Phase 2 hearings are complete there will be a further period of public consultation on any modifications to the plan, prior to it being formally 'adopted'.

For more information visit northumberland.gov.uk/localplan.

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Luxury kitchen and bathroom showroom opens in Ponteland

Home to some of the world's most exclusive kitchen and bathroom products, Stonebridge Interiors offer a full bespoke kitchen and bathroom design and installation service to customers across the North of England and Southern Scotland.

Many of the leading brands stocked by the new showroom are exclusive to Stonebridge in this region.

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

To complement our partnership with Stoneham, the kitchen manufacturer which has held the Royal Warrant since 1995, Stonebridge work with Miele, BORA, Buster & Punch, Spekva and many more carefully selected brands.

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