

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Action taken against Hallowe'en
and Bonfire Night offenders

.....
Hit and run driver dents
pensioner's pride and joy

.....
Discount scheme to help
people buy their own home

Happy New Year
(and good riddance
to 2020)

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Canadian sport with a difference added to high school curriculum

A distinctive Canadian sport is being added to Ponteland High School's PE curriculum, thanks to a grant from the Community Partnership.

Kin-Ball, which was introduced in Quebec in 1986 by PE teacher Mario Demers, differs from other team games because it has three teams taking part in a match and the ball is much larger with a 1.2m diameter.

The International Kin-Ball Federation has been spreading across Europe and Asia ever since, and the sport's popularity in the Czech Republic has elevated it to becoming their national sport.

The High School is able to include this additional team game, seen as an interesting alternative activity for students who do not engage in traditional sports, in its curriculum following funding for the Kin-Ball from Ponteland Community Partnership.

Monies were raised by a group of 16 young people from Ashington, Prudhoe

and Ponteland completing their National Citizenship Service Award, arranged by the Youth Service, by organising a Family Fun Day in Ponteland.

The event was part of a national programme providing a community project based on "making a difference in the community" helping to build confidence and self-belief and giving young people the chance to embark on challenges and building skills for work and life. The young people wanted to raise money to be spent on improving activities for young people who live or are educated in Ponteland.

The Kin-Ball donation is one of a number of PCP Youth Projects running into spring 2021, working alongside local schools and youth organisations to fund creative youth activities aimed at improving young people's wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

PCP Chairman Alma Dunigan said: "We need to help young people through this difficult time. The partnership has prioritised its efforts to encourage local schools and youth organisations who can

deliver innovative activities during these challenging times, for the benefit of our young people's wellbeing.

"Usually we deliver the projects but this time, as we can't due to Covid restrictions but schools and some youth organisations can, we are being more creative to support our community."

Paul Dunn, Head of PE at Ponteland High School, added: "This will allow us to develop our provision of moving Ponteland High School PE and school sport away from a culture of traditional sports and introduce an alternative and broader provision for activities.

"This is in line with our vision and core purpose for PE to ensure we teach and provide all students with a range of activities and opportunities to develop them as people and ensure they live a healthy active lifestyle."

The next round of funding, made possible through the generosity of local donations, will be at the end of January when the Community Partnership will look at the remainder of the applications for consideration.

Discount scheme to help people buy their own home

A discount scheme has been launched at a new housing development just a few minutes' drive from Ponteland to help househunters who otherwise couldn't afford to buy their own home.

Eight discount market value homes are being built at Ashberry Homes' Church View, off Stamfordham Road in Westerhope.

They will be offered to qualifying buyers for up to 70 per cent of their value as part of the affordable housing provision at the development agreed with Newcastle City Council.

The properties available through the scheme are two-bedroom Oxalis semi-detached houses, which include a living/dining room, a separate kitchen, and two

double bedrooms, one with en-suite shower room.

To be eligible for the scheme, buyers must not be able to afford the property at its open market value price. They must also either have been living in Newcastle upon Tyne on a permanent basis for at least 12 months, or have permanent employment in the North East region.

Alternatively they must demonstrate an essential need that they live close to another person who has lived permanently in Newcastle upon Tyne for at least 10 years, due to caring responsibilities or age.

Buyers must also demonstrate that they are able to proceed with the purchase within a reasonable amount of time, including having a mortgage offer. If the discounted plots are sold in the future, their price is restricted to up to 70 per cent of their open market value.

Ashberry Homes is building 184 new two, three and four-bedroom homes at Church View. The first homes were released for sale at the development in October.

Oliver Wray, Sales Manager for Ashberry Homes Durham, said: "There is a select number of homes available at a discounted rate at Church View, to help those who might otherwise be unable to afford their own home to step on the property ladder. We are also constructing 22 two and

three-bedroom houses for affordable rent alongside the homes for private sale.

"These homes are part of an attractive new development on the edge of open countryside, yet there's a range of local facilities conveniently close at hand and it's just five miles from the centre of Newcastle."

For more information on the discount market value scheme, visit ashberryhomes.co.uk or call the sales team on 07976 205211.



A computer-generated image of The Oxalis house-type at Ashberry Homes' Church View.






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Family's anger as pensioner's car damaged by hit and run driver

The family of an elderly widow whose beloved car was damaged in a hit and run style collision have slammed the driver responsible, saying they must have known what happened.

Norma Hall, 76, was making a rare trip out during the current lockdown restrictions to visit the dentist and opticians in Darras Hall when the incident happened.

The mother-of-two and grandmother-of-two returned to her Peugeot 106 to find the front nearside wing had been crashed into. No note had been left with the offending driver's details.

It had been parked outside Dobson's Estate Agents on Broadway between 3.45pm and 4.45pm on Tuesday December 8th.

Norma, of Darras Hall, said: "I am extremely annoyed – no one could have done this without realising."

Daughter Fiona Price added: "Like most people at the moment, mum is barely going out at all. She just needed to visit the dentist and opticians on Broadway and was only

away from the car an hour.

"Mum has had the car for many years – it has hardly done any mileage and is immaculate. It really is her pride and joy. But because of its age, if she made an insurance claim it would just be written off as the damage is estimated to be around £300 to £400.

"She is absolutely furious that someone would do that and not even leave a note. I would imagine there will be damage and red paint on the front driver's side of their car."

Fiona's anger and disbelief was echoed by local people commenting on the Darras Hall Facebook group, where she had posted an appeal for witnesses.

One correspondent wrote: "That's ridiculous. Sorry to see that. Some people can't park to save their lives and to cause such a dent and not leave a note is unacceptable."

Another added: "That is dreadful, somebody should be hanging their head in shame!"

A third agreed, writing: "Absolutely disgusting that whoever's responsible for this chose to ignore it and drive away."

While another appealed for

the person responsible to come forward: "So annoying; I have also had to foot the bill for such an incident, it's sickening. Hope whoever it is does eventually do the right thing."

The incident has been reported to police and local businesses have been

studying CCTV, but no images of the collision have been found. The car has been booked in for repair at a local garage.

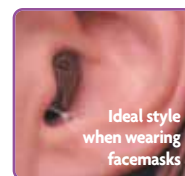
If anyone has dash cam footage or saw what happened they can contact Fiona on 07523 216722.

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Action taken against Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night offenders



PC Tom Ward, Ponteland Neighbourhood Police Officer



In last month's column we covered a number of incidents that had occurred over Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night.

These resulted in damage across our community among other issues and disorder. Through the cooperation with members of the public and other police enquiries positive action has since been taken against those responsible.

We would again like to thank those who got in touch with us, and to stress that this was a vital contribution to our enquiries.

Darker nights – road awareness

As the darker nights come in we would like to encourage our readers to ensure they remain aware of changing road and weather conditions. This applies to all drivers, cyclists and joggers who use our roads during the winter months. I would like to encourage readers to conduct the appropriate checks on their vehicles prior to use, and to be aware of the impact the environment can have whilst using our roads. Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions we have seen an increase in those exercising across Ponteland outdoors; whether this be running or cycling. I would encourage those who do to be mindful of low light levels and to use the appropriate high visibility clothing/equipment to ensure the safety of yourself and others.

Speeding vehicles – you said, we listened

I and other members of our team have recently received training in the use of speed detection devices that will allow us to take appropriate action against those who endanger themselves, our community and other road users. Over the coming weeks we will be proactively using our training to take action against offenders and to further educate our community on the risks associated with improper driving.

Parking - a careful reminder

Our team would like to encourage those who are going about the school run or commuting at busy times to be considerate around the placement of vehicles in and around schools. This is in the interests of ensuring that our vital highways and roads do not become obstructed, and that local residents are able to receive key services. This also will ensure that pedestrians are able to view all necessary areas of the road, and therefore navigate them more safely on foot.

How to get in touch

Readers can get in touch through 101 or web submission by visiting northumbria.police.uk. If your call is of an emergency nature this should always be done through 999. You may also speak with our team by emailing northernprudhoe@northumbria.pnn.police.uk or northernprudhoe@northumbria.pnn.police.uk. You can also provide information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via the Crimestoppers website.



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New Deputy Chief Fire Officer appointed

Northumberland has a new deputy chief fire officer.

Graeme Binning, from Stirling, joins Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service where he was Area Manager/Local Senior Officer for East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde.

In this role he was responsible for the delivery of the Fire and Rescue Service across three local authority areas covering a population of 350,000 incorporating seven wholetime stations and four retained duty system stations.

Graeme said: "I am delighted to be joining Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and I'm looking forward to getting to know my new service and everyone working within it.

"Having been with NFRS for only one week, I have had a really warm welcome

and have already started to develop some thinking in collaboration with the Service Leadership Team.

"I'm also looking forward to being part of Northumberland County Council and working with our partners to support the delivery of an excellent service to our communities and residents."

Chief Fire Officer Paul Hedley added: "Graeme will be a tremendous addition as we continue to push forward on our improvement plans and bring real innovation to the services we deliver for our communities and partnerships.

"In the short time he has been with us he has already impressed everyone with his passion and commitment to Northumberland. I'm really excited about how he will work with all of our staff and colleagues at Northumberland County Council to shape and influence the future of NFRS."



ADVERTISING FEATURE

Why emotional health is key to your quality of life

By David Lamb

In my column last month, I suggested the most important factor in a balanced lifestyle is physical health. The second is emotional health.

People who are emotionally healthy have greater control of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours and are more able to cope with life challenges.

They keep problems in perspective and bounce back from setbacks and they feel good about themselves and have good relationships (more on relationships in my next column).

Poor physical health can lead to an increased risk of developing mental health problems and, similarly, poor emotional health can negatively impact on physical health leading into an increased risk of some conditions, such as heart attacks.

Common causes of poor emotional health are stress of work and money worries.

Work-related stress is often caused by demands at work that exceed how much an employee can cope with; more than 11 million working days are lost each year because of

work-related stress, which can then contribute to conditions such as anxiety or depression.

Many people worry about money and one of the most common reasons why couples argue is money. These arguments are rarely about having too much money!

As a financial planner, I see a lot of people – usually business owners and members of the professions – who are working far too hard for many reasons, but quite often because they think they need more and more money.

In many cases, this is a fallacy. When they know how much is 'enough' they can often ease off, get a better lifestyle, and lose a lot of their stress and money worries.

Financial planning can help work-related stress by identifying how much a person needs to earn to give them the lifestyle that they want

without having to work for long hours in a stressful environment. I have seen many clients relieved that they can walk away from jobs they hate.

Being financially well organised can relieve a lot of money worries. I tell my clients that with an ongoing financial plan they only need to worry about money for three or four hours a year, as part of their annual review. After that, they can spend the rest of the year focusing on what's important, knowing that the financial aspect of their lives being well managed.

One of the best parts of my job is being able to tell people when they can stop doing the things that don't want to do and start doing things they do want to do.

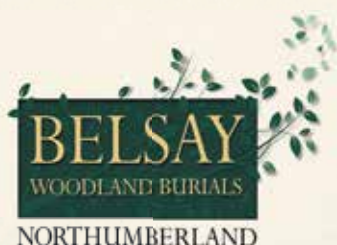
Do not let work-related stress and money worries affect your emotional health. Remember: the quality of your life is often a direct result of the quality of your emotional health.





Vanloads of Christmas hampers donated to needy families by generous students

After providing a tonne of help for needy families with 70 crates of supplies for Newcastle West End Foodbank in November, Ponteland High School students have now donated more than a vanload of Christmas hampers.



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Pupils from each tutor group in the school were tasked with providing food and presents for an individually decorated hamper with a festive theme. But staff say they have been "blown away" by their generosity and creativity.

On December 11th the Christmas hampers were collected by officers from the Early Help Team - South East/Central, Wellbeing & Community Health Services Group (Children's Services) at Northumberland County Council and Domestic Abuse Support Service Northumberland - Places for People Living+.

They were distributed to local people in need in the run up to Christmas.

The ladies from Northumberland's Children Services had to do a return trip as they couldn't fit everything in one van load and the lady from Places for People was left in tears at the generosity of the students.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "The kindness, generosity and thoughtfulness of our students and staff will make a substantial difference to a large number of people, at what can be a difficult time of year."

"This year the hampers have been just outstanding; a lot of work had gone into the decoration and it is brilliant that the students and staff are showing their compassion in a practical way for others less fortunate than themselves."





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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Anger at vandalism at a new play area and a call for a wide berth from panting runners in this month's letters...

New play area vandalised within a fortnight of opening

In the company of my young granddaughter, we visited the new play park located near Henry's Hut at the new school/leisure site.

We discovered that one of the see-saw seats in the park had been gouged out by some mindless individual (see photo opposite).

I do wonder whether the person responsible has considered his/her actions in this act of wanton vandalism?

A new facility to compliment the new school/leisure building and vandalised within two weeks of opening.

Would it be too much to ask that we could enjoy the new facilities without somebody destroying them?

Alan Mee

North Road, Ponteland.



Can panting runners give less mobile pavement users a wide berth?

I've never had the need to write in before, but I feel quite strongly about this matter.

As the winter is closing in and Covid seems to be spreading at an alarming rate it's really important that we all feel able to use the public pathways without fear, especially the old and infirm.

This is an appeal to all the people who run in and around the estate. It's fabulous to see you all active and trying to stay fit and healthy. However, could you please all try to be a little bit more considerate to other pavement users during these Covid times?

The number of times I have had to cross the road or throw myself into a bush to try and avoid a panting runner this past week is unbelievable.

Not everyone is mobile enough to be able to cross the road and I think we all have a duty to try and keep each other safe.

Simply crossing the road or taking a wider berth around walkers (especially if you are not wearing a mask) means we can all use the paths safely and without fear.

Chantel Noel

Darras Road, Darras Hall

February issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the February issue is Monday January 18th. Door to door distribution will be from Monday February 1st to Friday February 5th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the February 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.

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What's on...

Virtual talks by Northumberland Archive

Northumberland Archives are being brought to life in a series of free online talks hosted by staff from the archives and library teams. The virtual sessions, funded by a £48,000 grant from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund, continue with a talk on Thursday January 7th by Berwick Archivist Linda Bankier entitled 'Evidence of Women and their Lives in the Berwick Archives'. Archivist Sarah Littlefear will then talk about 'The Butler Family of Ewart Park' on Thursday January 21st. To book a place on the talks visit eventbrite.co.uk and search for Northumberland Archives.

Three ladies of Northumberland - Mrs Montagu, Emily Wilding Davison and Nancy Spain

A talk on Zoom by Freda Thompson at 6.30pm on Thursday January 21st. Members and guests welcome. If you would like to join the presentation on Thursday 21st January please register your interest by emailing: mike@brownzponteland.co.uk

Ponteland Senior Gentleman's Club

As the lockdown drags on with no prospect of us being able to resume meetings in the Memorial Hall, we have decided to hold online Zoom meetings at our usual meeting times – the second Monday of every month at 2.30pm. These will take the form of a short talk followed by an opportunity to ask questions and to chat. As with our normal meetings, we will welcome senior gentlemen as guests. Enquiries to pontelandsgc@gmail.com.

Ponteland Village WI

With Covid set to dominate our lives for some time to come, Ponteland Village WI is busy making plans for lots of virtual meetings. A Zoom craft evening in December was very popular and a series of Zoom coffee mornings have been held and more are planned for 2021 plus evenings with speakers and teach-ins. The book club has been meeting monthly on Zoom plus the Cycling for Softies and Walking Group have met when restrictions have allowed. A monthly newsletter has helped members to stay in touch and share experiences. For updates, email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or find us on Facebook.

Ponteland U3A

Due to the current situation we cannot meet at St Mary's Parish Centre until it is safe to do so. However, thanks to Zoom we are able to give our monthly talks on the first Wednesday of each month at 2pm. These talks are available for members and non-members alike. Apologies to those members who do not have internet access but we can only hope that the situation changes before too long. The contact number for information on Ponteland u3a is (01661) 824953. In the meantime keep safe and well.

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 Community Partnership

The partnership continues to work for the benefit of the community, but because of Covid-19 distancing restrictions, it is holding virtual meetings via Zoom. All residents are invited to view its activities on its website, where many facets of its work may be of interest. Comments and ideas are always welcomed. Visit pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

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Views sought on county council's draft budget plans



People living across Northumberland are being invited to have their say on the county council's draft budget proposals for the next financial year.

A cornerstone of the plans will be a focus on economic recovery after a challenging financial year, with significant budget pressures due to increased demand in adult and children's social care, special educational needs and disability services, as well as the impact of Covid-19.

Savings of £8.3m have been identified to balance the budget for 2021-22 but over the coming years there will also be a significant push on helping Northumberland to recover and grow economically, with an emphasis on delivering a green and sustainable future for the county.

From Thursday December 10th until January 21st people can go to **haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk** and give their views on a wide range of issues.

Council Leader Glen Sanderson (pictured) said: "The global Covid pandemic has presented profound challenges for us all this year – not least the way we communicate with residents and that's why we're doing things a little differently.

"Councils, including ours, have been on the front line of responding to Covid, adapting quickly to keep vital services operating, supporting our schools to stay open throughout, and protecting the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Nick Oliver, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources added: "It's with this in mind we welcomed the Comprehensive Spending Review last month where local authorities were given more flexibility around setting Council Tax.

"We know the hardship that

Covid has brought to many people and how saving a few pounds can make a real difference.

"Like many other councils our proposed Council Tax increase will be 1.99%, we're splitting the Adult Social Care Precept over two years – with an increase of 1.75% 2021, and then 1.25% the following year.

"So while facing extra demand for services we're looking to keep the rise to a minimum and continuing our ambitious capital investment to regenerate the county and bring jobs."

Coun Sanderson continued: "Whilst this year has been tough, we have continued to develop plans for economic recovery and progressed delivery of investment in the county's infrastructure – from new schools to leisure centres and improving roads.

"We always knew the financial context was going to be challenging this year - as well as into the future - and this is where we'd like you to have your say.

"We've always prided ourselves as being a council that listens to its residents so that's why we'll be opening up a discussion on our budget proposals.

"It will be a genuine consultation on the challenges we face, and an opportunity for people to let us know how they'd prioritise the services we deliver.

"We'll be gathering all this information together which will help us make some key decisions."

The Council's budget consultation runs for six weeks until January 21st and will go before Full Council in February.

Ponteland student gets ATP call-up

Ponteland High School's Marcus Jeffery got a call-up to support the ATP Tennis Finals at the O2 Arena in London.

For the Year 12 student, an excellent competitive tennis player himself, was chosen as a ball boy at this event for the second year running.

The ATP is the second highest tier of annual men's tennis tournaments after the four Grand Slam tournaments. A week-long event, the tournament is held annually each November at the O2 Arena in London, United Kingdom. In 2021 it will move to Turin, Italy.



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Be a reading hero this winter with Northumberland Libraries

Young bookworms are being invited to join a national winter reading challenge with Northumberland Libraries.

The Winter Mini Reading Challenge aims to help children discover the pleasure of reading over the Christmas holidays.

They can sign up online at wintermini.org.uk and set themselves a reading challenge - the recommended number is three books - and post a review of the books they read on the challenge website.

This year The Reading Agency has teamed up with children's publisher "Knights Of" to bring you the Everyone Is A Hero reading challenge, where they will meet characters from Knights and Bikes, High-Rise Mystery, and the Run series.

The challenge runs from December 1 to January 15. There will be a host of fun activities, videos and reading recommendations, plus an exciting competition on the challenge website.



Northumberland Libraries will also be sharing lots of fun activities and book recommendations on their Facebook page.

Children and families can use the Select and Collect service, which is available at most libraries, to select their favourite books or they can access them online via the digital library.

Children can also collect a Christmas Activity Bag from their local library which will contain lucky dip Christmas books, a craft activity booklet and other surprises subject to availability. Please call your library ahead or book online via Select & Collect.

Get those knitting needles and crochet hooks out

Following the popularity of the giant poppies displayed in the village to mark Remembrance Week, Ponteland Town Council is making plans to create three more for other areas for 2021 and is asking people to start knitting or crocheting poppies again.

More than 2,000 poppies will be needed so the Council is asking people to start now.

Coun Karen Overbury, who helps to organise Remembrance events in the village, said: "Due to concerns over the Covid pandemic and Government restrictions, many people are staying in their homes a lot more than usual. Also, the dark days and winter weather are keeping us all inside a lot more.

"So this is a good time to get out those knitting needles and crochet hooks to make poppies for the people of Ponteland to enjoy.

"Many people felt the giant poppies were an impressive and fitting tribute to the fallen of the two World Wars and subsequent conflicts, and we would like to make more for other areas of the village. Having seen the splendid displays, we are sure that even more people will want to get involved."

The Town Council has patterns on its website and supplies of wool which are available for collection by appointment or which can be posted out. For more information, visit ponteland-tc.gov.uk or tel (01661) 825092 Mon to Thurs 9.30am-1pm.

Happy New Year!

For those of you who may not have been able to get out to see the fantastic seasonal lights in the village during Christmas we have a stunning cover shot for the January issue courtesy of Colin Morgan Photography/Ponteland Print & Publishing. We hope you enjoy it.





Early Years provision in Pele Trust schools

Choosing the right school for the start of your child's education is one of the most important decisions for a parent. We are confident that in choosing a Pele Trust primary school you are choosing excellence.

Why start your child's journey through school in a Pele Trust primary school?

All five of our primary schools have years of experience in Early Years and have well developed provision that includes highly trained and experienced staff. Our schools work closely together and support one another to share the best of what we do to ensure outstanding outcomes for pupils.

We recognise the importance of building on the natural curiosity of children. Therefore in each of our schools pupils are given the opportunity to explore, investigate, problem solve, discover and experiment to support their learning. This is done within safe, orderly, warm and encouraging environments.

High quality interactions with well trained adults ensure that pupils develop effective communication



through expansive speech. We recognise the importance of well planned language development for social learning and communication, forming an excellent foundation for future success. Our curriculum provides no limits or barriers, but instead promotes a love of learning and a willingness to succeed where children consistently keep on trying, showing motivation and high levels of self control.

Please contact individual schools to discuss their provision and see which of our schools will best meet your child's needs.

Deadline for applications is 15 January 2021.





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