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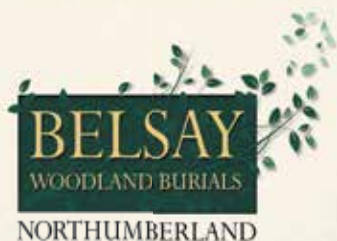


Anger as another bank
branch closure announced

.....
Restaurant gets licence for
350-capacity outdoor bar

.....
Plan unveiled to relocate
special school to Ponteland

Ponteland plants floral tribute to Covid victims



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Ponteland pays tribute to Covid victims

People from across Ponteland gathered on a bright October morning as part of a project to remember the huge effect Covid-19 has had on lives everywhere.

Almost 140,000 people have died in the UK alone as a result of the pandemic and millions have been affected.

Ponteland Town Council hopes that the planting of almost 2,000 crocus bulbs and the appearance of the bright spring flowers after the winter gloom will be a tribute to the many families who have suffered.

Ponteland Mayor Coun Christine Greenwell said:
"The Town Council wanted to create a permanent reminder of the worldwide virus.

"Our aim is that the Crocuses for Covid will, over the years, help residents and visitors to remember not only the sadness the virus caused to millions, but we hope that the bright blooms will also help us to remember the positivity and coming together of our community at this very difficult time, and offer new hope and joy for the future."

She explained that the Town Council had bought early-flowering bulbs of one colour to have the maximum effect.

Cover shot: Two-year-old Theo Dawson helps out at the bulb planting. Above: Ponteland Mayor Coun Christine Greenwell with town councillors and other volunteers. Photos by Barry Pells.

* Ponteland sees large rise in Covid cases - p15

Restaurant's outdoor food and drink 'market' licence approved



A Ponteland restaurant has been awarded a licence for a new outdoor bar area for up to 350 people – despite more than 100 objections.

Rialto on Main Street plans to open 'The Orchard' in an area behind the Lloyds Bank car park by the River Pont next summer.

Northumberland County Council's Licensing Sub-Committee was told the new external area will be in the manner of a family friendly 'Victorian Market' and contain three retail units, three food vendors, six market stalls, serveries and 152 seats.

The 102 representations received from interested parties, which included the Blackbird Inn and Yolo restaurant, centred on concerns about crime and disorder, public safety, public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

But claiming their plans had been "deliberately misrepresented" to cause concern in the village, applicant Suna Miah in a submission to the licensing committee wrote: "We have absolutely no desire to operate a "Stack" type premises catering for stags and hens...nor do we have any interest in building a 'festival' site.

"The external area will be called The Orchard and we have taken our inspiration from Altrincham Market in Cheshire.

"Our proposal would create facilities for small local independent businesses and provide them with the chance to establish themselves. We propose that the food stores will be occupied by a bakery, a coffee shop, a vintage sweet retailer and a small artisan craft business (or

similar businesses) as well as there being food providers.

"(We) have traded in the village for 35 years and have absolutely no desire to do anything that wouldn't be of benefit to our community.

"We think what we propose will be an enormous asset and will provide opportunities for new local businesses to establish themselves, and for there to be a new focus for residents to socialise in a relaxed and family friendly atmosphere."

Mr Miah had sought permission for live music and alcohol sales at the new outdoor area until midnight, seven days a week. But during the day-and-a-half hearing, the request for permission to stage live music was dropped and he agreed to limit capacity in the outdoor area to 350. Together with the indoor space, this will allow a maximum of 470 customers.

The licence also states alcohol sales in the outside area must stop at 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays and 10.30pm the rest of the week, while hot food service must cease at 11.30pm.

A decision notice issued by the county council said the committee had "taken into account that the applicant is an experienced licensed operator who has operated Rialto restaurant for over 20 years without any apparent issues or any undermining of the licensing objectives".

Planning permission will be required for the external works.

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Views sought on plans for new special school in Ponteland

Views are being sought on proposals to relocate a special school for children with social, emotional and mental health needs to Ponteland.

Northumberland County Council is consulting on moving Atkinson House School from Seghill, Cramlington, to the former Richard Coates CE Primary School site on Thornhill Road.

The site was vacated last year when the primary school

moved to the neighbouring former Ponteland First School building, after this school was relocated to the new combined schools and leisure complex on Callerton Lane.

If the plans are approved, the school would change from being a boys' school to also accepting female pupils and would open in September 2022.

County education chiefs say a new site is needed following a seven per cent increase in demand for special school places every year for the last ten years, including children and young people in Northumberland who have been diagnosed with autism.

The school, which currently has 79 male pupils aged 11 to 19 including six in sixth form, was rated for overall effectiveness as 'requiring improvement' at its last Ofsted inspection in January 2020, although behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management, and sixth-form provision were all rated 'good'.

In a report to the county council's cabinet, Head of School Organisation and Resources Sue Aviston wrote: "In Northumberland, the number of children and young people who have been diagnosed as having

autism, social emotional and mental health needs has been increasing, with significant additional capacity in the county's nine special schools being required year on year for the past 10 years.

"Overall, this steady upward trend in demand for special school places equates to an average increase over this period to date of 7% each year.

"...Within these numbers, there has been a significant increase in the number of children and young people who have been identified with a primary special need of autism and/or social emotional and mental health needs...there is also a growing demand for SEMH provision for girls in Northumberland from Year 7 onwards."

The cabinet approved a public consultation into the proposals, which was launched on October 13th and will run until December 1st. During this process further details on costs of the move are expected to be calculated, including an expected increase in the price of home - school travel.

Anyone wishing to take part in the public consultation can complete a short online survey at: haveyoursay.northumberland.gov.uk.

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MP's anger as Ponteland to lose another bank

Ponteland's MP Guy Opperman has reacted angrily to news the town is to lose yet another bank.

Lloyds Banking Group announced its Lloyds branch in Main Street would be one of 48 to close nationwide – 41 Lloyds as well as seven Halifax branches including one in Consett, County Durham.

The news follows the closure of the Barclays Bank branch across the road in January 2019, which itself followed the loss of the Nat West and HSBC outlets.

People seeking face to face banking transactions will have the choice of Newcastle Building Society's branch on Broadway, Darras Hall, or the Post Office branches on Broadway or Merton Road following the Lloyds Bank closure on February 8th.

Lloyds said a continuing decline in customer numbers had forced the nationwide closure plans.

Vim Maru, retail director for Lloyds Banking Group, said: "Like many other businesses, we've seen people using our branches less frequently in recent years, and this decline is continuing.

"Our branches remain a fundamental part of how we serve our customers but we need to ensure the size of our branch network reflects the number of customers wanting to use them."

But Mr Opperman criticised the Ponteland branch closure.



He said: "I urge Lloyds to urgently rethink their position. Access to cash and an in-person counter are vital services to residents who may not be able to access online banking services.

"The Ponteland branch serves many of the surrounding villages meaning it will hit another one of the rural communities in my constituency very hard. Clearly, footfall in branches has reduced since the advent of the pandemic. However, in-person banking services continue to be vital – we must save this branch!"

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Achieving your life's aims – the real focus for financial planning

By David Lamb

We have looked at the ten key components that make up your lifestyle over the past year in our monthly Pont News column.

Once you have identified your desired lifestyle, the next step is to establish how you will fund it, which brings us on to financial planning.

Many people think that financial planning is all about pensions, investment funds and life assurance. That is probably because that is what the financial services industry has led them to believe, so they can sell them more products.

The Chartered Institute for Securities and Investments describes financial planning as:

"A professional service for individuals, their families and businesses, who need objective assistance in organising their finances to achieve their financial and lifestyle objectives more readily."

Ultimately, I think financial planning is about ensuring that you do not end up in your later years looking back over your life and have regrets.

You don't want to feel you did not leave enough money to ensure your loved ones can maintain their lifestyle or that you will die leaving too much money, which could mean a life of wasted opportunities.

You don't want to mourn experiences that you never experienced, or hold on to your wealth for too long when you could have passed it to your children

when they actually needed it.

I have seen websites promising to produce a financial plan after a short initial meeting. But a properly constructed plan requires a lot of detail and reasoned and reasonable assumptions.

In future series I will describe the process of a structured financial plan. But over the next ten columns I will highlight the essential questions you should be able to answer and score, to ensure that your financial planning is on track to help you achieve you and your family's desired lifestyle.

Take our Score My financial planning questionnaire now to see how you are progressing with your plan at lambfinancial.co.uk/scoremy-financial-planning



Clubs urged to use new library as social space

Clubs looking for a new venue to meet in now Covid restrictions have been lifted are being urged to use Ponteland's new library.

Located in the new schools and leisure development on Callerton Lane, it is open from 10am to 4pm on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Library Assistant Julie Ennis said: "We are trying to get clubs to come back and use the library by promoting the space we have and are asking if anyone is interested in coming to a monthly crafts/knit and natter morning or afternoon at the library.

"We want to encourage people to see the library as not only a place to get books but as a place to come socially as well. Anyone interested can contact me via the library website at ponteland.library@northumberland.gov.uk."

The library offers a select and collect service on Tuesday and Friday each week from 10am to 4pm. Books can be requested by completing a select and collect form online, reserving items using a library card and pin at my.library.co.uk or by telephone on 01670 622401.

From early November the library will be open seven days a week as a new self-serve machine is being installed which will make the library much more accessible.



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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Concerns about the condition of the River Pont raised by correspondents in this month's letters...

Flood protection scheme should have reinstated pathway

The October issue of Pont News reported on the completion of the £2.7m flood protection scheme.

As I understand it the project came about because the Environment Agency had concluded that the existing earth banks, designed to hold back the flood waters, had become unstable and a decision was taken to replace them with sheet metal piling.

I had assumed that the grassy banks would be restored and re-landscaped once the piles were in place.

However, I was advised that this was not to be the case and that the earthworks were to be removed altogether as the Agency required permanent access to the face of the piles for maintenance purposes as they were to be encased in concrete, patterned to simulate stonework.

I suggested that the access way might be widened slightly to create a public footpath linking through from the Memorial Hall car park through to Callerton Lane.

I was looking forward to being able to traverse the banks of my local river all the way from Fox Covert Lane through to the Diamond Inn. The Agency refused to contemplate such a wild idea.

Given that my taxes help to support this organisation and also contributed to the £2.7m cost of the works, I find this a wee bit disappointing.

John Hague
High View, Darras Hall

River Pont "a complete eyesore"

Covid has been a time for 'staying local' – going out for pleasant walks around our village.

But once again the River Pont has let us down. It is a complete eyesore – especially on the Diamond Inn side – and so overgrown.

I did think local volunteers would take pity and pull up a few weeds, but now it is so overgrown a special team will be needed to get rid of it all.

The park and bridle paths are always well tended and the river flows nicely but not in the heart of the village, so why is it so neglected and who is responsible for its upkeep?

I had a poem printed in Pont News about two years ago about this and sad to say there have been no improvements made. It would be lovely to see a clean, flowing river once again – fingers crossed.

Jean McGowan
Rowan Drive, Ponteland

Is Estate Committee against 'less expensive' housing?

I was surprised to read that Darras Hall Estate Committee used the argument "that it would be out of keeping with the garden village nature of the estate" (Opposition growing to affordable housing scheme – October issue 193).

Yes, Darras Hall was designated as a garden village. But no one - after recent developments of mansions, walls, gates and outside lighting on houses - could ever consider Darras Hall has maintained the right to that title.

Perhaps they meant that it would be undesirable for owners to have less expensive housing in such close proximity?

Elizabeth French
Willow Way, Darras Hall

Success for Trustee appeal

In the September edition you printed our appeal for more people to become Trustees of Merton Hall.

The response has been good and two people have become Trustees, a new Secretary is joining and another Trustee has become Vice Chair.

Thank you to Pont News & Views for helping the future of Merton Hall.

Carl Rawlings and Christine Greenwell
Chair and Treasurer, Merton Hall

December issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the December issue is Monday November 15th. Door to door distribution will be from Monday November 29th to Friday December 3rd. 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.

What's on...

Dalton Village Hall

Our AGM is being held on Tuesday November 2nd at 7pm in the Hall.

Ponteland u3a

Meetings and talks at St Mary's Parish Centre are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 2pm. Our next two talks will be: November 3rd - Ed Waugh - 'Dirty Dusting'; December 1st - Christmas Festivities. We welcome enquiries from anyone wishing to join Ponteland u3a; please call the membership secretary on 01661 824953.

Merton Hall Ponteland

We are pleased to say that from November 5th Merton Hall will reopen and tea and coffee will be served from 9.30am to 11.30am on Friday mornings. As a gesture of goodwill, tea and coffee will be free on Friday mornings in November and December. Please call in for a cuppa and a chat, wearing a mask when entering the hall and using the hand sanitizer. Merton Hall also welcomes back group members and hall users from November 1st.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our next meeting will take place in the Memorial Hall on Monday November 8th at 2.30pm, when Anthony Atkinson will deliver a talk on a very famous local man, Admiral Lord Collingwood. Our Christmas event will take place on Monday December 13th in the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm. Seasonal refreshments will be laid on and musical entertainment will be provided by The Imagine Five.

Ponteland Village WI

Members are enjoying face-to-face meetings once again, on the second Tuesday of the month, with social-dancing in place. Until further notice, we will not be allowing visitors. The sub-groups such as the Walking Group, Dining Out, Cycling for Softies and Book Club are continuing. The next meeting will be on Tuesday November 9th at 7.30pm, when the Bangshees drummers will be visiting. For more about us, email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or look for Ponteland Village WI on Facebook.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Our major meeting of the year takes place on Wednesday November 10th at

Ponteland Memorial Hall at 2pm. Linda Fraser will be creating floral arrangements around her theme of 'Fantastically Festive'. Visitors are very welcome (£7).

Tuesday Bridge Club

We will be at Merton Hall at 2pm on November 16th, 23rd and 30th from 1.30pm to 5pm. People who do not have a current partner are requested to attend and we will try our best to find partners for anyone who needs one.

Ponteland Local History Society

Professor John Derry will be well known to many residents as a speaker with a reputation for having expert knowledge and delivering most entertaining talks. His talk (replacing the one previously scheduled for this date) on November 18th will commence at St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road, at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome £2.

Ponteland Friendly Stitchers

On Monday November 22nd from 2pm to 4pm we will be at The Hive Bar, First Floor, Ponteland Leisure Centre where Anne Hefford will run a mini workshop 'Christmas item' (kit required, please contact for details). There will be no meeting in December. Membership of the group is open to all or come to a meeting as a visitor for £5. Contact Secretary Penny Ford at pontelandfriendlystitchers@mail.com.

Dalton Carpet Bowls Club

At Dalton Village Hall every Monday between 7pm and 9pm. Come and give it a try in a friendly atmosphere - new members always welcome. Contact 07593 700 332.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

Ponteland Wildlife Group talks have now resumed by Zoom. For information please visit pontelandwildlife.wixsite.com. Talks are on the first Tuesday evening each month at 7.30pm: Tuesday November 2nd - cancelled; Tuesday December 7th - Chris Metherell, Flora of Northumberland.

Wilde Farm Christmas Market

Wilde Farm's Christmas Market will be held at Dobbies Ponteland from 10.30am to 4.30pm on Sunday December 19th. Go through the main building entrance and

turn left into the outdoor plant area for all the usual gazebos packed with local produce, gifts and crafts. Visit: wildefarm.co.uk.

Ponteland Methodist Church

Sunday worship 10am and 6.30pm - all welcome. Monday 'Open Door' café. Tuesday Women's Fellowship and Boys Brigade. Thursday Toddlers, Men's Forum, Women's Focus. Saturday walking group. Various Bible study and House groups. Pilates. Zumba. Room hire. Contact anncooperx@gmail.com or call 01661 824347.

Ponteland Ladies' Choir

Ponteland Ladies Choir has restarted face to face rehearsals at our new venue - Ponteland Community Primary School (next to the original high school) on a Monday evening from 7.30pm to 9.15pm (term time only). For further information please email pontelandladieschoir@gmail.com or contact Linda on 07771 536914 or Susan on 07710 418780.

Creative writing classes

Suitable for both beginners and more experienced writers, these classes will inspire and encourage you to write poetry, short fiction and memoir and to share and develop your writing through stimulating workshop sessions in a friendly and supportive group. We meet on Wednesday mornings in members' homes/gardens in and around Ponteland (or on Zoom depending on current Covid regulations). Email claire@claire276.plus.com for more information or to arrange a free taster session.

Rotary Ponteland

Rotarians in Ponteland are holding their meetings via Zoom every two weeks on a Tuesday morning. The group organises many local events raising much needed funds for local charities. For more information visit rotaryponteland.org.uk or email info@rotaryponteland.org.uk.

Ponteland Health Walks

Ponteland Health Walks meet every Tuesday at 10.30am outside Ponteland Leisure Centre. The free walks take 60 to 90 minutes on local footpaths. A good opportunity to walk safely, improve fitness and make new friends. Assistance dogs only please. Contact Gordon Allan on 07936 135469 for more information or just turn up, no notice required.



Fox Covert Lane to be closed for three months

A key route from Darras Hall to the A696 is to be closed to vehicles for three months to enable bridge works.

The access restrictions on the U9082 Fox Covert Lane will apply 24 hours per day, seven days per week, from Monday November 15th for masonry arch refurbishment on Beeches Bridge.

This will comprise excavating the bridge down to its arch, installing steel, mesh and reinforced concrete and resurfacing the bridge and road surface up to Runnymede Road.

A diversion will run from the junction of Fox Covert Lane with Runnymede Road to Darras Road and on to the A696 northbound – and vice versa.

Northumberland County Council, which is carrying out the works, said signs will be erected in advance of the works and access for residents will be maintained but will be severely restricted.

Pedestrian and cyclist access for residents and businesses within the works will be maintained via a temporary footbridge but not vehicular access. Site staff will be on hand to assist with any access requirements.

The works are scheduled to last 13 weeks, with completion due on February 13th.



Community champion recognised by MP's award

Darras Hall resident Alma Dunigan has been recognised for almost two decades of volunteering with a community champion award from MP Guy Opperman.

Alma was Chairman of Ponteland Community Partnership, which delivered a number of important projects, including improvements to the bridleway and wildlife corridor, restoration of the old railway path and the reintroduction of wild flowers and tree planting.

This was complemented by the creation of five educational information pedestals showing Ponteland's social history - station and rail workers, ICI explosive depot, Prestwick pit and the miners.

The Partnership closed down in April after 18 years having delivered its final scheme – the 'Physical and Mental Wellbeing Youth Project' which funded schools and youth organisations to deliver extracurricular activities. So far more than 2,000 young people have benefited.

Alma has now been recognised for her hard work through local MP Guy Opperman's Community Champion scheme.

She said: "I very much appreciate the recognition of local voluntary work. It should be said that without the support from former committees and their members, other organisations, funders and community supporters and volunteers – nothing would have been possible. I just put the pieces of the jigsaw together.

"Projects over the past six years were all about engaging with the community, young and old, to benefit the natural environment, individual wellbeing and to give pride in our local area."

Mr Opperman added: "Ponteland Community Partnership will leave a positive legacy for many years to come. I would like to thank all those who volunteered their time and skills to support the many great community projects. As the partnership comes to a close, I wanted to recognise Alma's hard work over many years through a Community Champion award. Well done Alma!"

Fresh talent unearthed at annual flower show

Fruit and vegetable growers, flower arrangers, cooks and crafters displayed their best efforts for one of the village's favourite annual events.

For despite being forced to go virtual for a second year, Ponteland Parish Flower Show organisers were delighted to welcome many new entrants to the 44th competition.

Hundreds of photos of fruit, flowers, vegetables, cookery, handicrafts and photography were submitted in 70 categories for this year's show.

Entrants shared their photos of everything from blanched leeks to begonias, along with plums and raspberries, scones and quiches, embroidery, watercolours and a range of classes for children.

Show treasurer Victoria James said: "While we had fewer entries in total compared to last year it was lovely to see many new people taking part in the show.

"So hopefully that will translate into new entrants to the physical show next year. We most definitely will not be doing a virtual show again!"

The entries and results can be viewed at pontelandflowershow.co.uk



Finn Cassidy - A decorated pebble Olympic theme under 9 years (1st place)



Christine Hudson - Pot plant flowering (1st place)



Val McNally - A quilted item (1st place)



An entry in the vegetable collection category

Restaurant secures entry in Michelin Guide just weeks after opening

Three friends behind a new fine dining restaurant in Ponteland are celebrating after it was included in the 2021 Michelin Guide just weeks after opening.

Chefs Danny Land and Ryan Carr and front of house manager Stephen Pitfield opened Eleven restaurant in May and were told they had been included in the prestigious guide less than four months later.

The friends planned their new venture after the pandemic left them without a job in April 2020, when a new restaurant opening did not go ahead.

Danny, of Ponteland, said: "We got our heads together thinking there must be something we can do and eventually managed to open our restaurant, Eleven, during the pandemic."

Due to lockdown restrictions the initial planned opening had to be postponed and was restricted to takeaway meals before permission was granted to open fully in May.

The trio are delighted at the early entry into Michelin's Guide for Great Britain and Ireland, which reads:

"Three friends have created an appealing restaurant offering two distinct experiences: lunch sees a menu of small plates, charcuterie and cheeses, while in the evening, it's a set 5 course tasting menu of understated, boldly flavoured, seasonal dishes. Smooth service comes with plenty of personality."

Danny, 33, said: "We are very proud of this achievement after such a short period of being open. We are trying to show that fine dining doesn't need to be stuffy and formal and can in fact be fun and in a relaxing and informal setting."

Eleven's wine bar can be used on a walk-in basis, unlike the restaurant which needs reservations. Visit elevenponteland.co.uk



Pictured (l-r) are: Ryan Carr, Stephen Pitfield and Danny Land.

Citizens Advice announces new service

Citizens Advice Northumberland has announced a new service designed to help people with a range of issues.

Community Connectors will improve access to and awareness of the support it offers by working with community organisations including Covid 19 response groups and food banks to increase referrals.

Lyndsy Peacock has recently been appointed as a Community Connector for Northumberland. She said: "At Citizens Advice, you may be aware we support people struggling with all sorts of issues.

"We have teams who deal with debt, energy, benefits and people in need of consumer advice. Our team also includes a Macmillan Benefits Advice team, who can support families after a cancer diagnosis.

"Most of our offices across Northumberland are now open for drop in appointments and the days and times can be found online at citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk."

Citizens Advice Northumberland Contact Details

Face to face office opening hours can be found on our website: www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk

Adviceline: **0800 278 7944**

Mon to Fri 9.00am - 4.30pm

Email advice via our online form at

www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk

Online advice www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Universal Credit Help to Claim service

Telephone **0800 144 8444**

Mon to Fri 8.00am - 6.00pm

Or **01670 339985**

Email: uc@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk

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Telephone **01670 339960**

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Email: debt@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk

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Email: energy@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk

Macmillan benefits advice

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Gym goers complete 100-mile charity rowing challenge

More than 50 gym goers took part in a 100-mile rowing challenge to raise funds for a hospice.

The rowers started the 12-hour marathon at No1 Gym shortly after 5am on Wednesday September 22nd – which is National Fitness Day.

The gym, which specialises in semi-personal training, began fundraising for Newcastle's St Oswald's Hospice in 2020 and held a

'Beach Day' themed event and some other fundraising challenges within the gym for members to take part in before Covid restrictions hampered the charity drive.

The latest challenge was to row 100 miles in under 12 hours on a rowing machine in the gym. As the machine resets after 30 seconds of inactivity, it was vital that there were enough willing participants to keep the rowing going all day, so staff called upon their members and local community to keep the rowing going all day.

James Milburn, co-owner and head trainer at No1 Gym, said: "St Oswald's Hospice is a charity close to the hearts of many of our gym members either through working there as staff or having had loved ones cared for there. When we decided to start raising funds for a local charity, it seemed a worthy and obvious choice."

Colleague Suzanne Fox added: "It was a brilliant day - everyone did a great job of keeping the rowing constant and it was lovely to have children popping in after school and the community getting involved and putting donations in our buckets."

"We ended up hitting our 100 mile target at 4.30pm, with James rowing the final mile. When our evening staff came in to find the challenge had been completed, they

didn't want to miss out, so they covered an additional 25 miles! It was a great team effort."

Thanks to the support of their staff, gym members and Ponteland community, the No1 Gym team raised £845 for the hospice. These funds will help the local charity to provide care to the adults and children who use their services.

Kirsty McDonald, Business Partnerships Fundraiser at St Oswald's Hospice said: "We are so grateful to our friends at No1 Gym and their wonderful members who helped make this event such a success. Without our community, the hospice wouldn't be here today so thank you to everyone who was part of this fabulous day of fundraising."

Ponteland records large increase in Covid cases

Ponteland has seen a large increase in Covid infections, with the number of positive cases much higher than the national average.

Latest figures released by Public Health England for the week to October 15th show there were 48 cases recorded in the parish – a 65 per cent rise on the previous seven day period.

This gives Ponteland an infection rate of 693 per 100,000 population – 55 per cent higher than the UK average of 446 per 100,000. Nationally, cases rose 17.2 per cent in the week to October 20th.

News of the increase in cases came as Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, urged the Government to implement 'Plan B' - the back-up strategy which involves measures including bringing back mandatory face coverings in public places.

Figures above correct as we went to print. To view the latest Government Covid-19 data visit coronavirus.data.gov.uk

www.ponteland-tc.gov.uk



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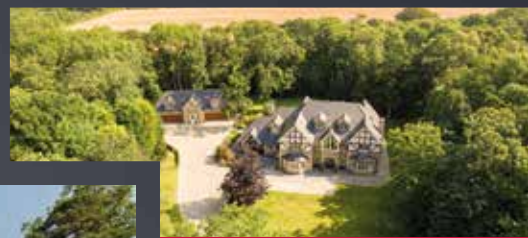
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