

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



**200th
ISSUE**

A weekend of celebrations
fit for the Queen

Gigabit broadband build
progressing well

Award for long-serving
Boys' Brigade leader

Food, drink and retail 'market' plans spark objections

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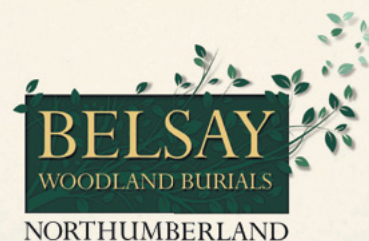
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Leslie Dodd receives his award from Mayor of Ponteland Christine Greenwell and other Town Councillors.

Boys' Brigade leader receives award for service to the community

A father-of-two who has continued to volunteer for Ponteland Boys' Brigade since his sons were members more than 20 years ago has received this year's Meritorious Award.

Leslie Dodd was invited along to the 1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade in the late 1990s to teach drill to the boys, including sons Johnny and Chris.

The funeral director, from Hexham, went on to become the company's Captain in January 2005 - a position he remains in today 17 years on.

Presenting the Meritorious Award for 2021-22, Mayor of Ponteland Christine Greenwell said: "It is now time to add a new name to the recipients' plaque hanging in the Council offices and to

acknowledge the great work carried out by Leslie Dodd, who has worked tirelessly over the years for the Boys Brigade.

"Leslie had previously helped out with the Air Cadets and in the late 1990s he was invited along to the Boys' Brigade to teach drill as his sons were members. He became the Boys' Brigade captain on January 1, 2005 and remains in this position today.

"When Leslie first started there was more focus on drill and inspection (as in the Armed Forces) with a few games and activities added in. There was also a Boys' Brigade bugle and drum band.

"Now the focus is on activities, crafts, and games. The young people learn not only about the world but also themselves - learning respect, teamwork, self-worth, and building confidence.

"The Boys' Brigade is a Christian organisation and though its purpose isn't to preach, there is regular Christian input in the form of a two minute thought, parable, or a short prayer. Highlights include leading camps and outdoor activities and seeing the confidence in the boys grow."

The 1st Ponteland company was established more than 50 years ago and meets every Tuesday night during term time at Ponteland Methodist Church.

Open to five to 18-year-olds, it is split into four sections: 'Anchors' aged five to eight who meet from 6pm to 7pm and 'Juniors' aged 8 to 11, 'Company' aged 11 to 15, and 'Seniors', aged 15 to 18, who all meet from 7pm to 8.45pm. In March the company relaunched as a Boys' Brigade Company with a Girls' Association.

For more information visit www.1stpontbb.org

Historic watering hole named Pub of the Year

An historic Ponteland watering hole has been named Pub of the Year at the North East England Tourism Awards.

The Blackbird was judged highly for its quality service, al fresco offering and how staff adapted to challenges brought on by the pandemic, among others.

Along with expanding its outdoor area to welcome a new, permanent outdoor tipi and street food kitchen, the venue introduced a takeaway service over lockdown and created a series of themed event boxes for diners to enjoy at home.

Stuart Young of the Northumberland Pub Company, which operates The Blackbird, said the whole team was delighted to be recognised by such a respected awards body.

"We are over the moon to be named Pub of the Year at the North East England Tourism Awards. This award is a testament to the hard work of our whole team, who pride themselves on going



above and beyond and delivering the best possible experience for our visitors.

"A great pub would be nothing without great customers to fill it and we are very grateful to everyone who has stopped by to support us by drinking and dining with us over the last seven years.

"It's a fantastic feeling to know that all of our hard work during the challenges of the last few years have paid off and we couldn't be prouder to become an award-winning venue."

The Blackbird dates back to the 14th century when it was built as a castle, later destroyed by retreating Scots in a raid in 1388. It was rebuilt in 1597 as a manor house which eventually became an eating house. An extensive restoration undertaken in 1935 revealed an ancient tower and beautiful Tudor fireplace, among other ancient objects.

For more information about The Blackbird visit theblackbirdponteland.co.uk

PONTELAND COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

In 2019 listings, PCMS is in the top 1% of ALL primary and middle schools in England and under its new name, PCPS, is proud to continue this legacy offering specialist teaching and spacious facilities.

Limited places still available for September 2022 from Nursery (age 2) through to Year 6. Children living in local catchment have a geographical pathway to Ponteland High.

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The Coates Green floral display and beacon for the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations in 2016.

Celebrations fit for the Queen

After months of planning, the people of Ponteland are ready to party. A right royal celebration is being held next month, with four days of activities ahead to mark the Queen's 70 years as sovereign.

From Thursday June 2 to Sunday June 5, people throughout Britain and further afield will be enjoying parties and activities, with an extra day's bank holiday to help everyone to celebrate.

And Ponteland has a wide range of celebrations over the long weekend.

It will start with a celebration on Coates Green from 8.30pm on the Thursday on Coates Green, with music from North Tyneside Steel Band. A piper will also play as the beacon on the top of St Mary's Church is lit at 9.45pm, part of a chain of beacons across Britain.

Ponteland Rugby Club will be holding its annual Beer Festival at the Leisure Centre on the Friday and Saturday from noon to 11pm on both days. The £20 tickets include admission, a promotional glass, programme and four drinks tokens.

The Leisure Centre will be holding an open day on the Saturday, with free classes, displays and competitions from 10am to 3pm. There will be free soft play sessions from 10am-12noon, followed by free sessions on the climbing wall.

The special weekend will end on the Sunday with Ponteland's popular Party in the Park, which has had to be cancelled for two years due to the Covid pandemic. But the Party in the Park will return bigger and better than ever, with a royal-themed event, starting at 1pm.

There will be lots of stalls and activities plus a children's fancy dress parade for any royal costume - from princess to knight in armour, king to court jester. There will be a small prize for every entrant, sponsored by Ponteland Town Council.

The day will end with a Duck Race at 4.30pm, organised by the team at Ponteland Rotary.

The Town Council is asking shops and businesses to decorate their windows with a royal theme and will be offering prizes for the best windows. Judging will take place on Monday May 30.

Groups and organisations throughout Ponteland, Darras Hall and the surrounding area are being urged to plan their own activities to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee and some groups of neighbours are already making plans for street and garden parties. Grants to help towards celebrations have been made available from Ponteland Town Council.

Ponteland Mayor Coun Christine Greenwell said: "Covid-19 has been tough for everyone for a long time and we want to give people something to look forward to.

"We would like to see celebrations across the area. The village centre will have bunting, we'd like shops and businesses to decorate their windows and we hope there will be a large number of parties and plans to celebrate the Queen's 70 years on the throne."

She said the Town Council can help to promote Jubilee events – dinners, special meetings, walks, competitions and much more – by detailing them on its website and Facebook page.

To discuss the plans and what you or your organisation can do, email Events Working Party chair Karen Overbury on k.overbury@ponteland-tc.gov.uk or Ponteland Town Council on enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk.

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Outdoor food and drink ‘market’ plan sparks objections

A planning application for a food, drink and retail development behind Rialto restaurant in Ponteland has sparked a string of objections.

Last October, Northumberland County Council's Licensing Sub-Committee approved a licensing application for the proposed market square, known as 'The Orchard', made up of market stalls, retail units and food vendors which could accommodate 350 people.

The agreed licence stated 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.

The proposal by Suna Miah had generated more than 100 representations from interested parties including The Blackbird and Yolo restaurant, centred on concerns about crime and disorder, public safety, public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

In January a follow-up planning application was submitted detailing double height shipping containers and a large canopy (as used in the bigger Stack entertainment venues in Newcastle city centre and Seaburn) with a large advertising screen.

There would be a servery and stalls could include a florist, artisan bakery, coffee stall and three street food stands.

An entrance arch off the car parking area would lead through



to the semi-circular shaped design, reflecting the curve of the River Pont behind. There would be 186 seats located on the ground floor, including private seating booths, with a further 90 on the mezzanine level.

The application includes more than 20 detailed documents including a design and access statement and noise assessment.

But the plans have met a similar reaction to the licensing application, with 114 objections lodged and only one representation in favour.

Consultees objecting include the Environment Agency, the county council's environmental protection team and Ponteland Town Council, which felt the proposed development was not suitable for the conservation area.

Local residents have raised concerns about a lack of parking, noise nuisance and a negative impact on the character of the town.

They include Grahame Venus, of Darras Hall, who said: "It will attract a considerable number of people from outside of the village in the evening causing all of the attendant problems that this can cause such as noise, litter, rowdy behaviour. Up to 350 people leaving the venue at night many under the influence of drink will cause issues for residents and the local police."

But a counter-view came from the sole supporter to have responded on the county council's planning portal, Joseph Turnbull, who described himself as 'a Darras Hall resident who appreciates a bit of nightlife and a bit of fun'.

He wrote: "The Orchard is exactly what the village needs; (it) lacks nightlife completely and is no wonder young people are forced to get £30 taxis into town or Jesmond to have a good time on a Saturday night."

No date has been set yet for the application to go before councillors. It can be found at publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk using the reference 22/00186/FUL.



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Girl Guide stalwart receives honour from the Duchess

A Ponteland Girl Guide stalwart has been presented with a British Empire Medal by the Duchess of Northumberland at Alnwick Castle.

Lucinda Porter was awarded for her service to the community in the Queen's New Year Honours List after 55 years' service to Girl Guiding.

Since 1966 Lucinda has been a Guide, Ranger, Young Leader, Assistant Guider and, more recently, Senior Leader of 4th Ponteland Guides. Thirty years ago she became District Commissioner for Ponteland and currently holds the position of Division Badge Secretary.

In November 2015 she was invited to attend the National Scout and Guide Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey in recognition of more than 40 years working with Guides. Then, in April 2018, she was presented with the annual Meritorious Service award by then Mayor of Ponteland Coun Alan Varley.

Lucinda, 67, also works part-time for HM Revenue & Customs and spends much of her free time raising cash for the Guides, having collected about £20,000 over the years.

On being notified of her honour she said: "The letter was a complete shock, but I was really chuffed. It's nice to be



honoured, but I don't do it for the recognition, I just enjoy being with young people. Girl Guiding has changed a lot over the years, but it is still good fun and the girls still learn all about teamwork, how to think independently and be more considerate of others."

ADVERTISING FEATURE

How to tackle the biggest threat to your wealth: inflation

By David Lamb CFP™ MCSI

I have seen many investors with a portfolio that has no real relevance to their lifestyle and ambitions.

Often they have some lower risk investments in deposit accounts and then longer-term investments to provide the best returns they can get, or an income to supplement their pension. But far more can be done to make your money support your lifestyle.

It is also prudent to have an emergency fund and then invest money in lower risk deposit accounts, to fund expenditure more than income up to five years.

Longer term, inflation is probably the biggest threat to your wealth. I see a lot of people taking more risk than they need to take with their investments, but almost as common as taking too much risk is taking too little risk.

People fear investing money in the stock market so they keep all their hard-earned wealth in deposit accounts, safe in the knowledge that this time next year they will have the same amount plus interest. Unfortunately, they forget about inflation.

If they have £1,000 in the bank this year and earn 1% interest, next year they will have £1,010. Unfortunately, if inflation is 3%, the buying power of that £1,010 is only £979. Their money is actually decreasing in value but the investor does not see that; however they do see the cost of living increasing.

To counter inflation impact, you may need to take a little more market risk, but over the longer term history shows you will maintain the real value of your money.

If you are never going to run out of money, don't take unnecessary risks to

get more money than you need; it may go the other way. Instead, reduce your level of risk to just enough to match - or slightly beat - inflation.

You need to ignore firms making promises about 'beating the markets, picking the best stocks and promises of high returns. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you would like to know more about evidence-based investing, we have an interesting booklet that we would be happy to email, free of charge. Please email laura.fairley@lambfinancial.co.uk to request a copy.

Remember: the main purpose of wealth is to support our lifestyles. As our lifestyle changes, our wealth needs to be able to adapt to those changes. If you do not know how much is enough, you do not have a financial plan.

Score your financial planning at lambfinancial.co.uk/scoremy-financial-planning.



Storm Arwen review in its final stages

A county council review into the aftermath of Storm Arwen is reaching its final stages.

When the severe weather hit the county on November 26 last year, thousands of homes were left without electricity and water services – including hundreds in Ponteland.

Earlier this year the county council's communities and place scrutiny committee launched a review to establish what lessons could be learned by all agencies involved.

Since the review got underway there have been 85 external submissions – including from residents, town and parish councils, the voluntary sector, councillors, and MPs.

A number of evidence gathering sessions have been held, with input from utility companies, the emergency services and council teams.

Coun Jeff Reid, who is chairing the review, said: "We're progressing well and are grateful for everyone who has made the effort to contribute so far – whether that's with written evidence or in person.

"It's been a very detailed study into all the events of November and December to capture everything that went well and also where things can improve in dealing with future incidents.

"Once all the evidence sessions are complete, hopefully at the end of this month, we will bring together all the information into a final report with recommendations we can action and take forward."

One area of concern that had been flagged was BT's plans to phase out traditional copper landline phones and replace them with digital fibre optic ones.

Those plans have now been put on hold – a move welcomed by Council Leader Glen Sanderson.

He said: "These plans had caused us some alarm as we know only too well the issues caused by loss of power during Storm Arwen. The ability for people in some of our remotest communities to use traditional landlines or public phone boxes, is essential especially in emergency situations like when mains electric fails.

"And while we appreciate the need for technology to develop and the benefits that brings there still needs to be a solution which can work for everyone in times of crisis – including those who've already had copper landlines removed."

The review, which follows a highly critical report by MP Guy Opperman last month which called for lessons to be learned by energy regulators and suppliers, is expected to publish its findings and recommendations soon.



Volunteers mark Great British Spring Clean with litter pick

The Great British Spring Clean 2022 was marked by public-spirited volunteers doing a litter pick in Ponteland.

David Dunscombe joined town councillors Christine Caisley and Sufi Ahmed (pictured) for the weekend clean-up, using litter picking equipment from the Town Council.

Keep Britain Tidy said nearly 450,000 bags of rubbish were collected during this year's campaign between March 25 and April 10.

A promotional graphic for Kumon. It features three circular inset photos: a woman in a blue blazer, a young girl, and a boy. The background is blue and white. The Kumon logo is in the top right, with 'MATHS ENGLISH' below it. Text on the right states: 'Research shows Kumon students are over a year ahead of the national average, and over six months ahead of their peers in maths at the end of primary school.*' Below this, it says: 'Book your free maths and English assessment today and help your child get ahead at school.' At the bottom right, contact information is provided: 'Ponteland Study Centre 07880 327782 ponteland@kumoncentre.co.uk'. A red circular badge on the left says 'KUMON DELIVERS PROVEN ACADEMIC RESULTS'.

Gigabit broadband network build making good progress

Work to develop a fully funded gigabit broadband network across Darras Hall which promises a “massive” increase in bandwidth is making good progress.

Provider Factco's build sub-contractor MJ Quinn is currently repairing Openreach ductwork and will soon be erecting telegraph poles to run fibre where this is beyond economic repair.

The first in a number of Factco cabinets being installed has appeared on the corner of Darras Road and Broadway in the last few weeks, and was due to be powered up by the end of April.

All homeowners who have already registered an interest in joining the new network should have now received an email from Ian Finlay at Factco asking for confirmation of their desired package and connectivity details.

The installation of Gigabit broadband across Darras Hall follows a vociferous campaign by local resident Simon Tappin, supported by Ponteland MP Guy Opperman.

The Darras Hall Community Fibre Schemegroup was launched to lobby for a much needed upgrade to the estate's telecommunications network provided by Openreach, which still uses copper telephone lines dating back to the 1960s.



Until now there had been no plans to update the last mile copper broadband cable service – known as Fibre to the Cabinet (FttC) or Superfast Broadband service – meaning many homes in Darras Hall would have continued to suffer from poor and inconsistent mobile broadband.

For more information visit factco.co.uk/project/darras-hall or contact Factco Community Manager Ian Finlay by email at ian@factco.co.uk.

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



A call for a warm welcome for a new special school in this month's letters...

Hoping for a warm welcome to new special school

I have just read a depressing item on page six of the April edition of Pont News & Views.

The article is about the relocation of a special school from Cramlington to Ponteland.

It states that during the consultation there were objections from six schools, Ponteland Town Council and 20 parents of children in Ponteland schools.

I find this incredibly sad; it gives such a bad impression of Ponteland.

I hope that the young people, staff and families will discover when they arrive in September that this hostile view is not typical of the majority of Ponteland residents.

Jennifer Hardy
Ryehaugh, Ponteland

Urgent appeal for trustees for Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall is a much loved and valued asset to Ponteland which has been part of the community for 100 years.

It's run by a group of eight Trustees who give their time on a voluntary basis.

We urgently need more enthusiastic and energetic Trustees to pick up the baton and take advantage of new opportunities.

The Trust is also in urgent need of a new Chairman and Treasurer.

If you think you could help in any role please ring me on 01661 821877 to learn what is involved.

Robin Ramsay MBE
Chairman, Ponteland Memorial Hall Trust

June issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the June issue is Monday May 16. Door to door distribution will be from Monday May 30 to Tuesday June 7. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the June issue. Please visit ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views for online issues and all updates.

Drivers need to better maintain their vehicles

On most occasions when I am in Darras Hall and Ponteland I notice cars with faulty or missing rear lights.

What should I do? I am not aiming to police the situation!

Dr Jill Gregory
Beech Court, Darras Hall



Put a spring in your step with Ponteland Runners

Have you taken up running recently? Maybe you've enjoyed getting out for walks and want to take things to the next level? Ponteland Runners could be just what you need!

The club is an inclusive and supportive group of over 200 runners of all abilities who share a love of getting outdoors and running together.

Sessions usually take off from the Ponteland Leisure Centre car park at 7pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, with long runs on Sunday mornings. There are led sessions for all different abilities, from those just starting out with running, to those who want to sharpen their skills and perhaps train for a new personal best.

We even have a triathlon arm for those that want to venture into the world of cycling and swimming too.

Find out more. Visit our Facebook page facebook.com/pontelandrunners, or email us at chair@pontelandrunners.org.uk

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...

Free taster sessions at Ponteland Bowling Club

Ponteland Bowling Club is offering free taster sessions to anyone that is interested on the following dates: Wednesday April 27 at 10.30am; Sunday May 1 at 2.30pm; Wednesday May 4 at 10.30am; Saturday May 7 at 1pm; Saturday May 28 at 2.30pm. To book a session either email pontelandbowls@gmail.com or telephone 07940 923286.

Ponteland Runners Beginners Course

Ponteland Runners will be hosting a beginners' course taking people through the couch to 5k course over a period of 10 weeks, starting April 27. Each session will start from Ponteland Leisure Centre on a Wednesday at 7pm. Find out more by contacting: running@pontelandrunners.org.uk.

Dalton Village Hall Carpet Bowls Club

The club restarts on Monday May 2 from 1pm to 3pm. All welcome even if you have not played before. For further information contact 07593 700332.

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 May 4 – 19th Century Rural Northumberland Schools by Christopher Tipple and June 1 – Air Traffic Control by Steve Cox. Contact the membership secretary on 01661 824953.

Annual plant sale

Ponteland Methodist Church will hold its annual plant sale on Saturday May 7 from 10am until 12noon.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our club AGM is being held in the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Monday May 9, when Professor John Derry will also address us on the subject of 'Edith Cavell – Shot by the Germans in 1915'.

Ponteland Village WI

The busy group has various sub-groups, including Walking Group, Dining Out, Walking for Softies and Book Club and, with more than 60 members, there is now a waiting list to join Ponteland Village WI.

The next meeting on Tuesday May 10 will be the AGM. The group meets on the third Tuesday of the month at St Mary's Parish Centre, at 7.30pm. For more information, email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or look for Ponteland Village WI on Facebook.

Gatherings for Christian meditation

A welcoming group meets in St Mary's Church for short times of meditation from 2pm to 3pm on the second Wednesday of each month. Our next date is May 11. All are invited to join us. We hold the space for each other in meditation, and explore together some of the rich inheritance of this Christian tradition which reaches back to the early church.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday May 11 at 2pm in our new venue, Ponteland CIU on Merton Road. Our demonstrator will be Kathleen Gibson on her theme of 'Celebrations around the World'. Visitors welcome (£7).

Friends of Kirkley Hall

Kirkley Hall continue their monthly talks at 7pm on May 11 with a stroll beside the River Tyne that was once badly polluted and toxic. The Tyne Rivers Trust will tell how a small team of experts looks after the waterways and how the river is now thought to be the best salmon and trout river in England. Free to members, £2 to non-members. All welcome, no booking necessary. Visit friendsofkirkleyhall200.org.

Go Tri events

Ponteland Runners will be hosting their ever popular Go Tri events which give people a chance to test out triathlon over a short distance. The events include a 200 metre swim, 9 km bike ride, and 5 km run. No experience is necessary and our supportive marshals will cheer you on. The events will be held at 7pm from Ponteland Leisure Centre on May 18, June 15 and July 13. You can book onto the events at gotri.org or contact triathlon@pontelandrunners.org.uk to find out more.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee afternoon tea party

Ponteland Methodist Church welcomes you to an afternoon tea party on Saturday June 4 from 1pm until 3 pm to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Come to the church hall for delicious cakes and a visual display of the Queen's reign.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee Strawberry Tea

We are holding a free community Queen's Platinum Jubilee strawberry tea at Merton Hall on Monday June 6 starting at 3pm. All are welcome.

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 in and around Ponteland. Email claire@claire276.plus.com for more information or to arrange a free taster session.

Rotary Ponteland

We meet at The Badger each Tuesday, alternating lunchtime and evenings. Visit rotaryponteland.org.uk.

Ponteland Methodist Church

Sunday worship 10am and 6.30pm - all welcome. Monday 1pm to 4pm 'Open Door' café. Tuesday Boys Brigade with a Girls' Association. Thursday Toddlers, Men's Forum, Women Together. Saturday walking groups. Various Bible study and House groups. Prayer and Fairtrade groups. Pilates, Zumba, dance. Room hire. Contact anncooperx@gmail.com or call 01661 824347.

Inner Wheel Club of Ponteland

Part of a women's voluntary organisation we are a small club founded on friendship. Meetings held on the first Monday of the month at St Mary's Parish Centre at 2pm include members spending social time together and talks, and occasional meals in a local restaurant and small fundraising events for charities are also held. New members and visitors are always welcome - contact 07568 743653.

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.

Ponteland Ukulele Band

We are a friendly group of mixed ability ukulele players and meet every Tuesday at the CIU Club from 1pm to 3pm. New members welcome.

Flood scheme wins top engineering award

Ponteland's flood alleviation scheme has won a prestigious civil engineering accolade at the Institution of Civil Engineers' (ICE) Robert Stephenson Awards.

The annual ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Newcastle saw 11 shortlisted projects battle it out for the small, medium and large category awards.

The £2.7m scheme, which has given 250 homes and businesses greater protection, won the medium category Robert Stephenson Award for projects between £1m and £5m.

The works involved the replacement of a 189-metre stretch of fluvial flood defences which comprised existing walls and embankments along the River Pont that had minimum residual life remaining.

The defences were replaced with a 10.5m deep sheet pile wall encapsulated with a reinforced concrete wall which utilised an imprinted and pigmented finish.

Being near a conservation area meant the scheme needed to blend in with the walls and buildings of the town, so an area was created adjacent to the wall to enhance existing landforms and promote biodiversity.

The River Pont adjacent to the scheme contains a rare habitat of both signal crayfish and white-clayed crayfish. Surveys were



undertaken prior and during construction to protect the native species.

The project was delivered by Arup and BAM Nuttall for the Environment Agency.

The ICE awards are held annually to showcase the outstanding work done during the past year by civil engineers in the North East region.

Join the team at Darras Hall Primary School

Caretaker - 37 hours pw full time position

Salary Scale: Band 4 NJC SCP 7 to 11 (£20,444 to £22,129)

At the heart of your community, the best thing about Darras Hall Primary School is undoubtedly our pupils who are engaged, independent and curious. Add into the mix a body of staff who really love what they do and you have a fantastic place to work!

We are looking to appoint a flexible, enthusiastic and reliable caretaker to join our school. This really is a pivotal role in school and you can expect to become quickly known to colleagues and children alike. To work in our busy school, you should be positive, hardworking and have high standards of service delivery and customer care.

The ideal working pattern for this role is a split shift from 7am to 9.30am and 1pm to 6pm Mon to Thu (7am to 9.30am and 1pm to 5.30pm Fri). During school holidays it is usually a straight shift from 8am to 4pm.

The most important thing to us is appointing the right candidate so we are happy to be as flexible as we can within this working pattern. We would consider applications from those interested in part time working or in evening and weekend lettings only. Please do not hesitate to contact the school in the first instance to discuss.

There is also the possibility for the right candidate to gain skills and qualifications through an apprenticeship and we will provide you with the time for training.

For more information and an application pack visit darrashallprimary.com/vacancies or contact David Clay on 01661 823857 to discuss the role or to arrange a school visit. Completed application forms and supporting documents should be submitted by email to admin@dhpschool.uk, by post or hand.



Ponteland Flower Show returns for 45th year

Ponteland Flower Show will be back for its 45th year this September following two virtual events.

The pandemic meant residents were only able to show off their exhibits with photos but Ponteland people were resourceful and judges were very impressed with their efforts. Several people who had never exhibited before came forward.

All of the traditional skills will be represented in this year's show so it's time to start thinking about what you can grow or make to impress judges and visitors.

Not only gardeners can join in; there are classes for cooking and preserving, photography, craft work including woodcraft, art, and special classes for children. So if you sent a photo of your craft work last year, why not bring the real thing to this year's show?

This has always been a show for everyone since the beginning in 1977. Experts in all areas can show off their skills but beginners and those who just pick the best in the garden on the day can also win the trophies.

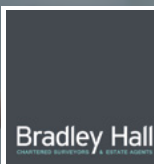
David Goodchild, Chair of the Show Committee, said: "We want to make our 45th show the best ever and demonstrate that the people of Ponteland and the surrounding villages haven't been daunted by the disruption caused by the virus."

The show will be held in the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 10 with staging on the Friday evening and Saturday morning. Schedules will be available nearer the date.

The Committee is missing a few of the trophies awarded in 2019 so if you've got one (or more) please return them to Les Dinning, 57 Kirkley Drive, Ponteland. Call 01661 821941.



Visitors admire the exhibits at the Flower Show in 2019. Photo by Paul Norris.



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First ever Local Plan adopted for the county

The first ever comprehensive Local Plan covering Northumberland has been formally adopted by the county council.

It means a final break from the plans of the former district and county councils and it will guide all future planning applications for the period up to 2036.

In February the Plan got the green light from Government – with Full Council approval the last hurdle before adoption.

The Northumberland Local Plan, which includes new planning policies, will guide and detail the scale and distribution of development.

It sets out a range of development proposals as well as planning policies, which will be used to assess applications and guide the location of future development in the county up to 2036.

The Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination back in May 2019.



Council Leader Glen Sanderson and Cabinet Member for Planning Coun Colin Horncastle with the newly adopted Local Plan.

Following a lengthy series of hearings during 2019 and 2020, and consultation on a schedule of modifications in 2021, the examination of the Plan has concluded.

Government inspectors declared the plan 'sound', subject to recommended main modifications, earlier this year and their report on the examination of the Northumberland Local Plan has now been published on the council's website

at northumberland.gov.uk/localplan

Council Leader Glen Sanderson said: "Not only does this represent an ambitious strategy for employment growth, it's progressive and forward looking. It also reflects modern approaches to tackling important challenges like climate change, enhancing biodiversity and delivering affordable housing – issues that are of key importance to us."



COACH TOURS 2022

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15th July – 4 Days

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5th August – 3 Days

Chester & Shrewsbury Flower show
12th August – 3 Days

Southport Flower Show
21st August – 2 Days

Charming Cornwall
11th September – 6 Days

Scotland & the Cairngorms
7th October – 4 Days

Killarney & The Ring of Kerry
16th October – 7 Days

Cadbury World & Midland Safari Park
23rd October – 2 Days

Harrogate Fizz & Fayre
11th November – 4 Days

Thursford Christmas Spectacular
19th November – 3 Days

Winter Escape to the Scottish Borders
2nd December – 4 Days

Door to Door collection points available, subject to availability & additional cost

For further information or if you would like us to send you a brochure please contact us on **01434 681 325** or email helen.jewitt@jewittscoaches.co.uk. More details can also be found at jewittscoaches.co.uk

Double century for Pont News & Views



200 not out! Bringing you the news every month since 2005.

Nearly 17 years since its launch, your community magazine Pont News & Views has reached 200 not out!

It has been published and delivered free to nearly 5,000 homes and businesses across Ponteland parish every month (apart from three issues in 2020 during the first Covid lockdown when we were online only) since our first edition back in October 2005.

The not-for-profit publication was launched by the former Ponteland Parish Council and Ponteland Community Partnership to replace the monthly Neighbourhood Watch bulletin and the Council's quarterly newsletter.

The very first issue included articles on work starting on the new first school, progress on the build of a new health centre, the start of consultation on a village centre regeneration blueprint and our first what's on guide.

Since then we have covered all the major events and issues to affect the parish, from the flooding in September 2008 to the

Diamond Jubilee celebrations in June 2012.

The wide variety of community events the parish enjoys, including the Party in the Park, Duck Race, Wheelbarrow Race and Flower Show, give us plenty of photographic opportunities.

Over the years, successful community campaigns we have featured included opposition to plans to build a phone mast outside the former Darras Hall First School in 2010 and the high profile protest against green belt development at Birney Hill between 2013 and 2015.

We have retained the popular letters page and what's on guide, added in-depth features on the major issues affecting the parish and now use the popular Facebook groups in the parish to promote each magazine.

You can also find the latest issue and back copies going back ten years online on the Town Council website at ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views

- We always welcome suggestions for improvements to the magazine – please send your ideas to the Editor at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk.



Easter Treasure Trail a huge hit with local families

Ponteland's annual Easter Treasure Trail once again proved a huge hit for families.

More than 100 children aged up to 12 years took part, meeting on a glorious Easter Saturday lunchtime to collect their maps ready to hunt for the 20 hidden clues dotted around Ponteland Park.

After completing their answer sheets

they were welcomed into Merton Hall for refreshments, sweets and a 'colour your own crown' challenge.

The winners of the three prizes for each age group – up to six years, and seven to 12 years – will receive Eldon Square vouchers of £30, £20 and £10 from event organiser Ponteland Town Council.

Lindsay Oliver, with daughters Sophie, 11, and Francesca, five on the treasure hunt.
Pic by Barry Pells.

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