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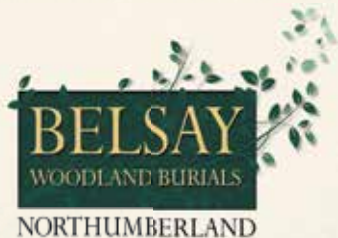


Quarry plan could bring
eight HGVs an hour

Residents poles apart over
Darras broadband rollout

Tiny forest scheme leads
to anti-social behaviour fears

Fab French fortnight for Pele Trust pupils



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Produced by Cian creative pr



Anna Grieves, Millie Loughran, Will Douglas and Louie Matthews of Heddon St Andrews C of E Primary School.

Children have a ‘moment génial’ in France

More than 80 lucky primary school pupils enjoyed a fab fortnight in France thanks to a Government-sponsored foreign study programme.

The Year 6 students from Pele Trust primary schools in Ponteland and Heddon-on-the-Wall spent the last two weeks of June in various locations in the north of the country in a trip funded by a £90,000 grant from the Turing Scheme.

Highlights included visits to trenches, the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, Dunkerque’s beaches as well as the partner school Ecole Primaire La Salle at Amiens and local French businesses to buy cakes and chocolate.

Pupils from Ponteland Primary School visited Vendhuile, where the whole village came out to greet them for a day of sports and games together.

Similar scenes were enjoyed by pupils from Heddon-on-the-Wall St Andrews C of E and Richard Coates C of E schools in Amiens, while a smaller group of pupils from Ponteland Primary School also visited Paris and the College Jean Vilar as well as many city landmarks.

Sophie Milner, 11, from Throckley, described the trip as “an incredible experience” while Will Douglas, also 11,

of Darras Hall, said: “I wasn’t sure I’d like it but I didn’t even have time to be homesick. I would definitely do it again!”

Ruth Magee, Primary Languages Teacher at the Pele Trust Primary Schools, organised the visit. She said: “All pupils who went said they were glad they went and would go back, and more than 90 per cent said they felt more confident about travelling abroad and meeting new people.

“Similarly high numbers say they are now more interested in learning a foreign language, which will set them up nicely for success at the high school.”

As well as Paris and St Omer there had been plans to visit Ecole Internationale Differdange but the group was unable to travel to the Luxembourg partner school as it was a refugee centre for Ukraine.

But the Pele Trust has just heard it has been one of 13 schools/trusts in the North East to be successful in securing funding from the Turing Scheme for next year.

Lynn Blain, CEO for Primary Schools in the Pele Trust and Headteacher at Ponteland Primary School, said: “The international curriculum is very important to us and trips like this where we can work with other children in a different country bring our learning to life.



Pupils from Richard Coates C of E Primary and Heddon Primary at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial.

Our children will truly benefit from a global experience.”

The Pele Trust is seeking new schools in the Calais and Amiens region, as well as Athens, Rome and Paris, to partner. If any readers have links or wider knowledge about historical town twinning with the Ponteland area, they are asked to contact Ruth Magee at r.magee@ponthigh.org.uk.

Cover shot: on the beach at Gravelines looking east to the Dunkerque evacuation site.

Campaign launched to tackle anti-social behaviour



By PC Graeme Harbottle, Ponteland Neighbourhood Policing Team

I wanted to use this month's edition to highlight and inform you of the work we will be doing over the summer months in our area.

Our team recently set up a campaign to tackle and prevent any form of anti-social behaviour occurring in and around Ponteland Park, Merton Way shops and the leisure centre.

This campaign will see officers attend these areas at peak times where anti-social behaviour has been previously reported.

I am aware that this issue is a concern for local residents, and I want to reassure you our whole team will be treating the operation as a priority over the summer.

This campaign will work alongside all the schools in our area before they break up for their summer holiday and with local youth groups over the rest of the summer.

Our aim is to engage with anyone causing or being involved in any

aspect of anti-social behaviour and strong action will be taken against any offenders to combat this issue and to prevent its reoccurrence.

I would also like to let everyone know about how they can be kept informed of any issues that are occurring in our area via Northumbria Connected.

Northumbria Connected is an easy way for you to send and receive messages from Northumbria Police. You decide on the updates you want to receive; a way for us to better understand your concerns directly.

It allows you to share your priorities, concerns and views with us directly. You will receive information that you want to receive from us on those matters that affect you and your communities most.

Northumbria Connected also allows you to share your feedback with Northumbria



PCSO Laura McCann and PC Graeme Harbottle.

Police on how you think we have tackled the problem and it allows you to create groups with other people in your area with the same interests.

You can easily sign up today at northumbria.connected.co.uk.

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"Thank you for giving our girl such a wonderful introduction to PCPS. We have all thoroughly appreciated your care, support and humour."

Quarry could bring dozens of HGVs each day through Ponteland

A campaign has been launched to try to stop plans for a major new quarry development which could result in dozens of HGV journeys a day through the centre of Ponteland.

North East Concrete Ltd has applied for planning permission for the extraction of four million tonnes of dolerite from a 28-hectare site half a mile south-west of Kirkwhelpington.

Named Northside after a local farm, it is currently used for cattle and sheep grazing and is also home to bats, skylarks, meadow pipits, linnets, brown hares and hedgehogs. Proposed mitigation measures include checking habitats before their removal to ensure no species are present.

Dolerite - also known as whinstone - is a hard stone that is used widely as a crushed aggregate in the construction industry, including as a key part of the production of concrete.

It would be extracted up to a depth of 22m (72ft) and the site infilled with both existing overburden removed from the site and imported inert material (soils, stone, clays, rubble and other aggregates that cannot be recycled) over a 20-year period.

Reclamation would then continue for a further five years until 2047, reinstating and creating 12.1ha of rough pasture grassland, 9.6ha of Whin grassland, 3ha of agricultural land suitable of pastoral use and 1,350m of new native species hedgerows.

The site, allocated for the extraction of crushed rock aggregates in the newly adopted Northumberland Local Plan to meet the county's mineral needs to 2036, would operate from 7am to 6pm weekdays and 7am to 1pm on Saturdays, but not on Sundays or bank holidays.

It is proposed that on average 46 loaded HGVs will serve the site each working day, equating to an average of 92 two-way movements in a day or eight an hour. The average load capacity will be approximately 25 tonnes.

It is believed the majority would travel on the A696 via Belsay and Ponteland to and from the firm's processing plants in Newburn and Birtley, which supply products to the wider region.

Among the 69 objections to the planning application on Northumberland County Council's planning portal as we went to print (with just one in favour), were several from Ponteland residents.

David Priestley, of The Beeches, wrote: "I strongly disapprove of this proposal. The town of Ponteland is desperately in need of a bypass as the A696 is a major trunk

road to the Scottish border. It is already a terrible bottleneck and the thought of all of these extra HGVs is making the matter much worse and is appalling."

And Joanna Reed, of North Road, wrote: "North Road is a community road in Ponteland that is already overwhelmed by HGV traffic, the plight of which is currently completely ignored by NCC."

People living near the proposed site have set up campaign group KRANE (Kirkwhelpington Residents Against Needless Extraction) to fight the plans and have leafleted homes in Ponteland to raise awareness.

A spokesperson for the group said: "There are many people in Ponteland who are very worried about the consequences this will have for those living in Ponteland."

And discussing the local impact, the spokesperson continued: "We think this represents the introduction of a major heavy industry into this hitherto sleepy village, and believe that such a complete and significant change to our way of life should only be made with the consent of all Kirkwhelpington residents."

The closing date for comments on the application, which can be found on the NCC planning portal at publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk using reference 22/01909/CCMEA, is August 1.

Key changes as Flower Show returns

Ponteland Flower Show returns next month after two virtual events for its 45th year - with some key changes.

It is now an open show, so exhibitors no longer need to be residents of Ponteland; friends and family from outside the village are very welcome to join in.

There will now be no charge for entries, but also no prize money - just prize certificates and bragging rights!

Finally, entry to the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 10 will be donation only, with all money raised used to keep the show running and payment can be taken on the door by card reader.

Class schedules are being distributed throughout the village and are available via the show's Facebook page Ponteland Flower Show.



Residents poles apart on broadband installation

The installation of full fibre broadband in Darras Hall has been delayed by a row over new telegraph poles.

Fibre and communication technology company FACTCO, leading the project, says it is conducting an internal review which will look at network delivery plans in areas of the estate where new poles are proposed.

The review, which has been estimated to last three to four weeks, follows a number of concerns raised by residents in Wentworth Court and Oaklands. Broadband installation in both streets has been put on hold pending the review, but other areas are unaffected.

The issue centres on the need to use telegraph utility poles in parts of the estate where surveys have shown either blocked underground ducting or no ducts available to house the full fibre cable, to avoid digging up

paths, streets and property driveways.

The majority of streets in the first phase area (457 homes) where this is needed have existing poles, but Wentworth Court, for example, does not and it was proposed to erect seven new poles there.

This led to a number of complaints to both FACTCO and Darras Hall Estate Committee, and a row played out online on the Darras Hall Community Fibre Scheme Facebook page.

In a project update published on the company website FACTCO said: "A number of concerns have been raised with regard to proposed new poles in Darras Hall. These poles were intended to support the delivery of full fibre broadband to the area.



The Factco cabinet power meter being installed and hooked up at Broadway.

"We are listening, FACTCO will be conducting an internal review over the next 3-4 weeks (estimated) which will look at network delivery plans in areas of Darras Hall where new poles are proposed.

"For clarity, the areas of Wentworth Court and Oaklands will be placed on hold while the review takes place. The remainder of the project will continue.

"The review will likely impact the overall delivery timescale and connection forecast dates for the areas mentioned above. Information will be released on the new delivery plan following the review."

For more information visit factco.co.uk/projects/darras-hall or email Janine Docherty - Community Fibre Lead for Northumberland at janine@factco.co.uk.



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Glowing tributes as Ponteland education leader retires

A Ponteland education leader retires this month after more than three decades serving a North-East college group.

This summer staff and students will bid a fond farewell to Northumberland College Principal Nigel Harrett, who took over the helm in 2019.

Under his leadership the specialist technical and land-based college has undergone a transformation programme which included a successful Ofsted inspection as well as significant investment in facilities at its Ashington and Kirkley Hall campuses.

Nigel, who lives in Ponteland, said: "It has been a real privilege to lead Northumberland College and to use my leadership skills to positively impact the college's success. I will always be passionate about the importance of education and the role it plays in upskilling communities and improving economies."



Starting his career at the Newcastle and Gateshead Water Company, in 1989 he became a lecturer in accounting and business at Sunderland College before progressing through the ranks to Deputy Principal and Deputy Chief Executive.

In 2019, Northumberland College was required to merge by the Further Education Commissioner and Sunderland College was selected as the merger partner, a decision supported by the Department for Education. The college became part of Education Partnership North East, which also includes Sunderland College and Hartlepool Sixth Form.

Chief Executive of Education Partnership North East Ellen Thinnesen said: "I am deeply grateful to Nigel for his tremendous commitment and loyalty... he has dedicated the entirety of his educational career to our college group. This is an impressive achievement. Nigel has a lot to be proud of and can retire knowing he has truly made a difference."

Jeff Hope, Chair of the Local Governing Board at Northumberland College, added: "Nigel's authentic, hardworking and down to earth approach was exactly what our college needed. He genuinely cares about people and a positive future for the students, staff and our community. As a county we owe him a lot."

The college recently announced the appointment of Gary Potts as the new Principal following a rigorous selection process. Gary, who is currently Group Vice Principal for Business, Innovation and Partnerships at Education Training Collective (Etc.), joins in August.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

The many reasons you need a will

By David Lamb CFP™ MCSI



Many people do not make wills. The most common reasons for this are procrastination, fear of tempting the 'Grim Reaper', not being able to decide who should inherit, not wanting to pay the fees or thinking that assets will pass automatically to the family.

Then there are the people who are just selfish and don't care what happens after they have gone.

There are many reasons to make a will, which could include:

To name guardians for children

- If you do not state who should look after your children, should you die, the family courts may need to choose a guardian. This may not be somebody you would agree to.

To provide for financial dependents including stepchildren

- This may include allocating funds for education or a deposit on their first home. Stepchildren will not automatically inherit, which may not be your wish if they are a big part of your life.

To protect partners

- Unmarried partners will not automatically inherit if there is no will. This could include the family home.

To avoid family disputes

- Family arguments often arise when the deceased is intestate and can be costly and damage family relationships.

Inheritance tax planning

- Writing a will can be a good opportunity for inheritance planning which, don't forget, is a tax on accumulated assets after paying tax.

Who will take care of your pets?

- You may also want to allocate money for food and healthcare.

To protect your digital assets

- What do you want to happen to your music, photographs, emails etc? How can people access these? Can your passwords be located?

There may also be issues with your beneficiaries:

- Are they responsible enough to benefit? If not, what could the possible consequences be?
- Your beneficiary's legacy may be lost should they be involved in divorce or bankruptcy proceedings at the time of inheriting. Do you want your potential ex son, or daughter in law, to effectively inherit your assets?
- Ultimately, who will benefit from your personal assets your children, or your stepchildren? Or even your surviving partner's new partner!

Death in service benefits and pension death benefits can be very flexible, with a little planning, but many people do not give much consideration to nominating beneficiaries, losing out on huge potential benefits.

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Anti-social behaviour fears over 'tiny forest' scheme

A house builder has come under fire over a pilot community education project it is feared could attract anti-social behaviour.

Bellway Homes has secured planning permission from Northumberland County Council for the planting amphitheatre on agricultural land north of Eland Lane, Ponteland.

The Newcastle-based developer said it would "be used as a space to develop knowledge and skills on tree planting, forest management, collecting and recording of environmental data, citizen science, and can be used as a tool to raise awareness of climate change".

A small section of hedgerow on the lane has been removed and a 31-metre stone path created to the 'tiny forest' amphitheatre, where 300 new trees will be planted.

But Bellway has been criticised by some local residents after starting works on the scheme prior to receiving planning approval for the change of use, despite this being allowed under permitted development. Other concerns raised by the five objectors included flooding and drainage, access and parking, flytipping and an increase in anti-social behaviour.

Mark Wales, of Paddock Hill, Eland Haugh, which overlooks the location, was one of the objectors. He wrote: "This area will act as a magnet, as a gathering point which may lead to anti-social behaviour causing a nuisance to nearby residents."

Derek and Jacqueline Robinson, also of Paddock Hill, wrote: "Creating a contrived mini forest in the countryside is bonkers... This project is window dressing, showboating, as a prelude to what?"

Ponteland Town Council also objected, setting out concerns over access, litter, vandalism and the risk that it could

become a hangout area for youths resulting in anti-social behaviour.

Members of Castle Morpeth Local Area Committee who were against the plan, which was recommended for approval by officers, included Ponteland North ward councillor Richard Dodd. But after a vote resulted in a tie, the chair of the meeting gave her casting vote in favour.

Bellway say that the site is on a flood plain and could not be further developed, adding that some schools have already used the site for educational purposes, with Ponteland High and the Percy Hedley Foundation attending planting days.

A spokesman added: "As the Tiny Forest matures, it will attract a wide range of species and provide enjoyment for the local community. We are using this trial as a benchmark with a view to creating similar Tiny Forests across developments, providing vital biodiversity on or near our sites."



Katie Rowell, 12, with other Year 7 students from Ponteland High School at a planting day at the Bellway Tiny Forest site in April.



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The Editor
Pont News & Views



Thoughts on the planned £1m sporting clubhouse and a call for more information on the Town Council website in this month's letters...

We hope the community will get behind our sporting dream

Ponteland United FC and Ponteland Rugby FC totally concur with the views expressed by Mr John Hague's in his excellent letter in the July issue of Pont News & Views.

However, there is no point in 'crying over spilt milk'; the situation we find ourselves in currently is unlikely to change.

Though we would love Northumberland County Council to give us the use of the land at the other end of Callerton Lane and build the extensive suitable facilities, this would not we fear be a serious option.

The land is much too valuable and the cost of building a totally new development including car parking and the required facilities supporting a clubhouse is unfortunately unrealistic.

Having been supported by the County Council to secure a Community Asset Transfer of the land, we hope that we can gain sufficient support to progress with our plans for development of a new community asset and have the town appropriately represented and catered for with sporting infrastructure.

Even if we build the new Community Clubhouse on our proposed site we will still need to use the amenities of the new school/leisure centre to support our many teams (between us we have over 70 teams playing for our clubs).

In these circumstances we must make the most of the opportunity we have and try and 'build our dream.' We hope that the local community will get behind us and support us in our endeavours to continue and improve our efforts in providing sport to many organisations and the youth of our area.

Paul Brooks, Chairman Ponteland United FC and David Comeskey, President Ponteland Rugby FC
Callerton Lane, Ponteland

Wider discussion needed about sporting facilities

I agree with much of John Hague's letter in the July issue, but not with provision of a clubhouse near the Callerton Lane junction with Middle Drive.

Today's school security standards require secure fencing and the community has lost the public access to the playing fields we used to enjoy.

In the old leisure centre they had changing rooms, a licensed clubroom and some outside seating for spectators. Was there an expectation that something similar would be included in the new build?

The land near the Callerton Lane/Middle Drive junction which used to be the high school's playing fields should be kept as a public access recreational facility.

A wider discussion about what can be provided at the leisure centre without further loss of mature trees is needed.

Mike Brown
Woodlands, Darras Hall

More information needed on Town Council website

Pont News & Views is published by Ponteland Town Council and the publication is rightly regarded as an excellent local community magazine.

However there have been no reports on the Town Council since June 2021, when the local election results were published. So where do we go to get information about the work of the Council?

The website, apart from statutory planning matters, provides only minimal information about its ongoing business. The Council certainly fails the 'transparency code' for timely provision of minutes within one month of the meeting.

It should be publishing all reports to listed agenda items within three days of the meeting, but still does not bother to provide this essential background information.

Furthermore, listed as an item on the July agenda there is a reference to a Special Meeting on June 27. There is no mention of this on the Council website. So how, why and what was this 'special meeting' about?

The bottom line is that the Council continues to fail its electorate through basic omission of information provision. How can the general public be properly informed and empowered to effectively participate at the limited question time available at the monthly meeting? No wonder this facility is rarely if ever taken up by an individual non-Council member.

Richard Worrall
Rosewood Drive, Ponteland

Response from Ponteland Town Council

Ponteland Town Council prides itself on the transparency of its approach and welcomes feedback from residents.

Mistakes do, however, happen in any organisation and the Town Council apologises that the announcement of the special meeting was not on its website, although notification was on the Council's noticeboards.

Reports of Town Council decisions and events are regularly published in Pont News & Views. This is above and beyond requirements to load minutes and decisions on the Council website. Quarterly monitoring of our website is carried out by our website providers and staff are trained in meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Council minutes are published on the website after they have been approved by the Full Council at its monthly meeting. This has always been the case.

The Town Council is constantly looking at procedures and makes changes when required.

Councillor Christine Greenwell
Town Mayor

September issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the September issue is Tuesday August 16. Door to door distribution will be from Tuesday August 30 to Monday September 5. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the September 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.



Rotary urges support for Duck Races

Local businesses are being urged to support one of the village's most popular annual events as it returns to Ponteland Park in September.

Rotary Ponteland is raising funds for The Great North Children's Hospital Foundation at the RVI in Newcastle in this year's Duck Races.

Rotarians are once again calling on businesses to support the event by sponsoring a race or entering a boat in a dedicated race. And for duck racers, tickets will be on public sale in Waitrose Ponteland on Friday August 19 and Saturday August 20.

This year's event, being held on Sunday September 4, will include a 'Spot the Duck' competition for pre-school children and an opportunity for older children to design and construct their own boat and race it down the river.

More details of the event and how you can enter the competitions are available at rotaryponteland.org.uk and on Rotary Ponteland's Facebook page. Anyone interested in sponsoring a race or a boat should email events@rotaryponteland.org.uk.

Incoming Rotary President Janet Cusworth said: "The Duck Races is a wonderful event for all the family and will hopefully provide a fitting finale to the school summer holidays."

What's on...

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: August 3 – The Chelsea Flower Show by Bill Bland; September 7 – Northern Ghosts by Ken Smith. Anyone wishing to join Ponteland u3a can call the membership secretary on 01661 824953.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

John Welsh will address us on the subject of 'Northern Coalfields' at our next meeting in the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Monday August 8.

Ponteland Village WI

Our group has grown to more than 60 with members enjoying monthly get-togethers and a variety of subgroups, including a Walking Group, Dining Out, Walking for Softies, Dog Walking and Book Club. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month (except in August) in St Mary's Parish Centre, at 7.30pm. Look for Ponteland Village WI on Facebook or email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com.

Gatherings for Christian meditation

A welcoming group meet 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 August 10. 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.

Ponteland Friendly Stitchers

On Monday August 22 from 2.15pm to 4.15pm at The Hive Bar in Ponteland Leisure Centre we have a 'Tea and Stitching Afternoon'. Bring an unfinished project, or one you have been meaning to start, for a relaxed afternoon. Membership of the group is open to all and you can come to a meeting as a visitor for £5. Contact Secretary Penny Ford at pontelandfriendlystitchers@mail.com.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

On Tuesday September 6 Nick Johnson, Project Officer of The Veteran Tree Project, will give a talk on 'The Veteran Tree Project' at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road. Admission £2 including refreshments. Open to all.

Ponteland Flower Show

The 45th Ponteland Flower Show will return to the Memorial Hall on Saturday September 10 after two years running virtually. See article on p5.

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 Britannia Hotel 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.

Knit & Natter Group

Knit & Natter on Tuesday afternoons from 1pm to 3pm at Ponteland Library. For more information contact Library Assistant Julie Ennis at ponteland.library@northumberland.gov.uk

Parents warned over increase in arson attacks

Fire chiefs are asking parents to speak to their children about the dangers of outdoor blazes after a spike in arson attacks this year.

Northumberland Fire and Rescue has attended 337 such incidents, with rubbish and undergrowth being the most common. The service attended more outdoor fires than any other incident in 2020/21, with three-quarters found to have been set on purpose.

There have been 12 deliberate outdoor fires in the last year in Ponteland - 11 of which were grass and undergrowth and one a car.

Graeme Wright, who leads on education in the service's Community Safety Team, said: "If crews have been called out to extinguish a deliberate woodland fire, then they can't respond quickly to any other emergency where there may be a threat to life or someone's home.

"We are asking parents to speak to their children and talk about how fires affect not just ourselves as a service, but also remind them of the environmental damage that is being caused because of deliberate fires."

The Community Safety Department and crews attend schools on a regular basis to educate young people around the dangers of fire and how anti-social behaviour and peer pressure are contributing factors to deliberate fires.



In addition the service also runs a bespoke fire awareness education programme called 'Extinguish', designed to educate young people who may have a fascination with fire.

Helen Visocci, Prevention Manager, added: "These fires are a real risk to life. Wheelie bins are often a target for people who engage in this type of anti-social behaviour and if your bin is too close to your house it can easily spread to your home, sheds and fences."

The fire service is actively working with Northumbria Police, community partners and neighbouring fire and rescue services to help reduce incidents of outdoor fires.

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Cherished 18th century pub to reopen its doors

An historic pub dating back to the early 1700s is to be given a new lease of life after being acquired by a North East hospitality group.

The Highlander, a former coaching inn and watering hole of Bonnie Prince Charlie, has been purchased by the team behind Northumberland wedding venue Ellingham Hall.

Situated at Higham Dykes between Milbourn and Belsay, the pub boasts a large restaurant area, open plan lounge bar and a function room accommodating up to 50 people.

The group has put pen to paper on a deal for the Grade II-listed building after it was put on the market by the UK's largest pub company, Stonegate, at a valuation of £500,000.

The award-winning firm now plans to breathe new life into the venue by undertaking a significant refurbishment programme with the aim of officially opening its doors by Easter 2023.

Anthony Hunter, director at Ellingham Hall, said: "The Highlander is steeped in heritage and we're thrilled to have added it to our portfolio.

"Over the coming months, we plan to invest significantly in a redevelopment programme that will breathe new life into the site, ensuring it once again is at the heart of the Belsay



community while preserving its rich history and we can't wait to get started."

The venue was marketed by North East commercial and residential property agency Bradley Hall.


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Pont Tap regulars fly the flag for Ponteland Scouts

Generous donations from regulars at The Pont Tap have funded two new flags for Beavers and Cubs at Ponteland Scouts.

Surpluses from the regular quiz nights at the popular micropub on Main Street were passed on to Ponteland Scouts.

Group Scout Leader Barry Hirst welcomed the donation. He said: "Ponteland Scouts are at the heart of Ponteland community and, while a newcomer, The Pont Tap is also embedding itself in the community. We are pleased that they chose us as their charity."

The new flags will be used at the Remembrance Day Parade, St. Mary's Christmas celebration and St. George's Day.



Barry Hirst receiving the cheque from Mick and Angie Barnes of The Pont Tap with Ponteland Scout Leaders and Beaver William Hutchinson, six, and Cub Thomas Maloney, ten, happily waving the new flags.

Learn to Dance



Strictly Starters Autumn Term

New adult beginners dance classes starting in September on a Wednesday evening in Ponteland

This class is ideal for adult couples of all ages who want to have an enjoyable time together learning to dance some basic Ballroom and Latin American Argentine Tango and popular Sequence dance routines.

Our lessons are fun to attend and give you the opportunity to laugh, learn and exercise both body and mind with like-minded people in a friendly and social environment.

Places will be strictly limited and we apply a first come first served policy. So, if you are interested in coming along, and want to register your place in our Autumn Term, then please visit our new members page on our website www.strictlystarters.com; or email us at strictlystarters@btinternet.com



Or visit our Facebook page: @strictlystarters



Or call Malcolm on 07768 596380

Bus service 74

The Town Council currently meets the cost of an evening bus service each Saturday from Newcastle to Ponteland including Medburn. The Clerk reported that the County Council had confirmed that the cost would be increasing following a renegotiation of all of the Tyne Valley bus service contracts. The Town Council had made a decision at the May meeting to retain the service until the end of the financial year and that was confirmed.

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Multi agency meeting re anti-social behaviour

A brief report of a meeting held on June 16 to discuss anti-social behaviour was presented at the meeting. County Councillor Gordon Stewart from Prudhoe attended to outline measures taken there to combat problem behaviour and invited Town Councillors to visit the town and see what had been put in place. A further meeting will be held in Ponteland in the autumn.

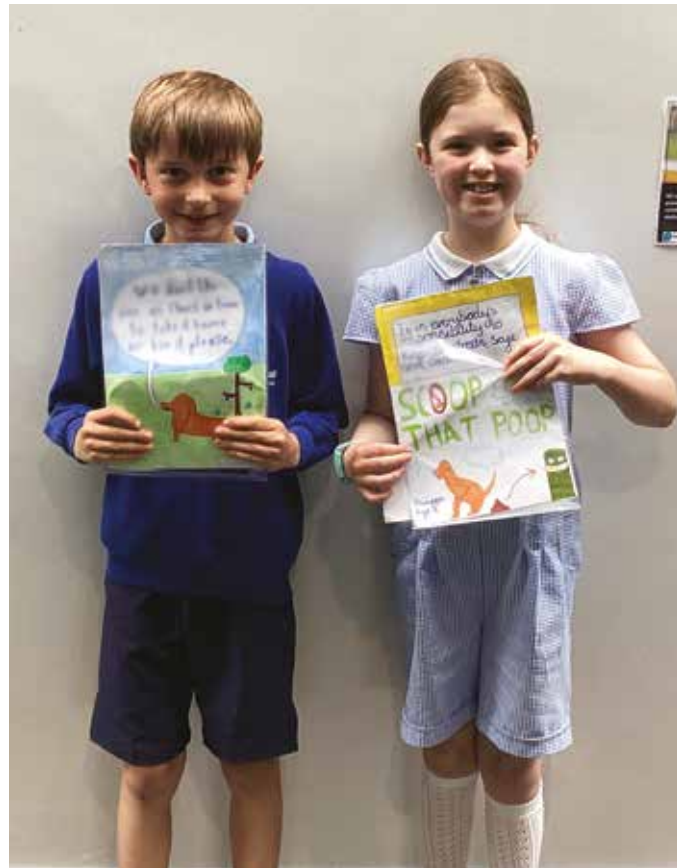
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Highways Working Party

Following the receipt of recommendations from the Highways Working Party, the Town Council reaffirmed its request for a Ponteland Bypass or Relief Road in the major road schemes and agreed the following three priorities for the Local Transport Plan submission for 2023-24 to the County Council for consideration:

- Investigation of traffic calming measures on the north side of the A696 coming into and out of Ponteland.
 - A package of improvements to raised bus stops and dropped kerbs on Darras Hall in priority order if possible.
 - A package of improvements to junctions on Darras Hall estate and North Road in priority order if possible.
-

This report is based on the meeting of the Town Council held on July 13.



Edward and Philippa's posters front environmental campaign

Two Darras Hall Primary School pupils will see their artwork on display across the estate after winning a competition to design an environmental campaign poster.

Nine year olds Edward and Philippa will also enjoy a trip to Namco Funscape at the MetroCentre after each received a £25 voucher for the venue.

The competition was launched by Darras Hall Estate Committee in response to complaints from residents, particularly on The Rise, about dog dirt not being picked up or bags being left on the ground or hung on trees.

The Committee has funded two new dog bins for The Rise and ordered signs based on the winning designs to be placed around the estate.

Every child who entered received a bar of chocolate at an assembly at the school.

A promotional poster for Kumon. It features a woman (teacher) and two young girls (students). The text includes 'KUMON', 'MATHS ENGLISH', 'Research shows Kumon students are over a year ahead of the national average...', 'KUMON DELIVERS PROVEN ACADEMIC RESULTS', and contact information for the Ponteland Study Centre.

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