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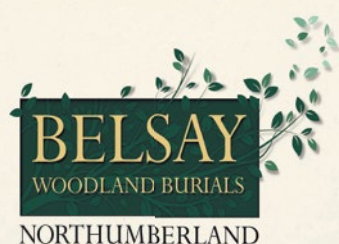
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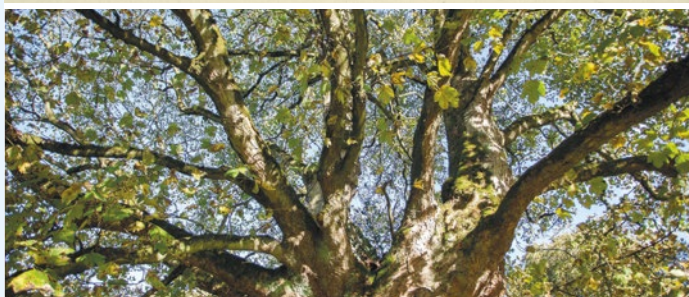
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Joseph Larkin, seven, and Ava Larkin, five.



Dan Fairbairn, nine.

Creative collaboration celebrates River Tyne

A year long creative project celebrating the River Tyne culminated in an exhibition of art, music and dance at Ponteland's school and leisure complex.

Primary school pupils from Pele Trust have been following the journey of the River Tyne using the creative arts to explore and tell its story.

The trust's six schools have worked both individually and collaboratively to deliver artwork, musical compositions and artistic performances, with pupils from Ponteland High School supporting younger children via workshops and mentoring.

The project was supported by the Institute for Creative Arts Practice and the School of Arts and Cultures at Newcastle University.

University lecturer Dr Julia Partington has led music workshops in the primary schools, while sound recordist David De La Haye and Senior Lecturer in Composition Rob McKay have helped children produce musical compositions using pond dipping with underwater microphones. Meanwhile, undergraduate art students planned and delivered art lessons.

Pele Trust's dance and music specialists also worked alongside a postgraduate student from the Creative Institute for Arts Practice to create a short film of dance inspired by the River Tyne.

The three-day exhibition in the sports hall at Ponteland Leisure Centre, which culminated with a performance by Pele Trust choir and musicians on July 13, was led by Senior Lecturer of Contemporary Art Dr Gayle Meikle, assisted by two interns.

The project is the brainchild of Ponteland Primary School teacher Carly Frame, a fine art graduate, who has worked closely with the university to arrange placements for art students at the trust's primary schools.

Carly said: "The project has grown into something far greater than I could have imagined...I am so proud of the efforts of all our pupils and grateful for the support of colleagues at Newcastle University."

Cover shot: Charlie Day, nine. Photos by Barry Pells.



The exhibition attracted visitors of all ages.

Camera club sets its sights high

Members of Ponteland Photographic Society set their sights high during a morning of drone photography on the Northumberland moors.

Trying their hand at this new skill on private farmland, they enjoyed taking high quality images of the magnificent upland scenery.

Club President Mike Sadler said "This was one of several summer outings we enjoy until our regular weekly Monday evening meetings at Merton Hall resume at the end of September.

"Our programme will include a mixture of visiting speakers, members' own photographs, friendly competitions and practical help. If you have even a mild interest in photography, why not come along and see what we can offer."



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Limited places still available for 2023/2024 from Nursery (age 2) through to Year 6. Children living in local catchment have a geographical pathway to Ponteland High.

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"In order that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

New Chief Fire Officer for Northumberland announced

The new Chief Fire Officer for Northumberland has been announced to replace Paul Hedley, who retires in August after 36 years with the service.

Current Deputy Chief Fire Officer Graeme Binning, who has also enjoyed a long career in fire and rescue, is taking up the top post.

Graeme joined Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service in 2020 from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, where he worked across multiple portfolios in several different areas of Scotland. He had previously served at Strathclyde Fire & Rescue and Hampshire Fire & Rescue, where he started his career in 2001.

Married to Jodi and a proud dad of 14-year-old Molly, Graeme enjoys running, cycling and the occasional triathlon outside work.

He said: "It's a great honour to be




appointed as the new Chief Fire Officer and I'm excited to be following the good work of Paul. Northumberland is a beautiful place to work and I'm happy to be working alongside people who make this county proud and to be serving the people in it."

Glen Sanderson, Leader of the County Council, added: "I would like to extend my congratulations to Graeme on achieving this promotion - it is very well deserved. I've had the pleasure of working closely with Graeme and the rest of the senior management team at the fire service and know he will be an excellent appointment."

Outgoing CFO Paul Hedley added: "I'm delighted that Graeme will be the next CFO of Northumberland. Graeme has been the Deputy Chief for the last two-and-a-half years and he has already made a tremendous impact during that time, leading on some hugely significant service improvements.

"To have an officer of Graeme's quality and calibre leading our service and our wider directorate, means that our staff, residents and partners can have confidence that we will continue our work to respond to the changing needs of our communities and improve all aspects of our service delivery."

Coun Gordon Stewart, Chair of the Fire Authority, said: "Graeme... impressed the interview panel with his skills, knowledge, experience and firm commitment to continuing the great strides the fire service has made in recent years. Graeme will be a great asset to the service and the communities of Northumberland."


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Ponteland named one of Britain's most desirable towns

Ponteland has been named in a top 50 list of Britain's most desirable towns.

The Telegraph commissioned estate agents Savills to use the latest census data to compile a list of the 50 places that scored the highest across several factors.

These included the proportion of residents holding managerial jobs, their level of qualifications, the state of their health and the costs of buying a house. Put more simply, towns with good schools and attractive surroundings - a huge draw for high earners.

The majority, including top placed Harpenden in Hertfordshire, are unsurprisingly in the South-East within an hour's commute of the capital. But the North-West also has prominent entries such as Cheshire market town Wilmslow in 23rd place and Stockport suburb Cheadle Hulme rated 26th.

Newcomers to the top 50 list include Hurstpierpoint, a village in rural West Sussex, Hitchin in Hertfordshire and the city of Bath. Chigwell in Essex, once hailed by Charles Dickens as "the greatest place in the world", has climbed the most places from 69th to 32nd.

Ponteland is in 34th place, ahead of Windsor, Bath, Oxford and Winchester.

The Mayor of Ponteland, Coun Karen Overbury, said: "It comes as no surprise to see Ponteland among Britain's 50 most desirable places to live in. We are very lucky to be surrounded by beautiful countryside and to be the gateway to Northumberland.

"We have a large number of groups and organisations, excellent schools, an impressive leisure centre and much



more. And, of course, we have easy access to the city of Newcastle and the spectacular North East coastline.

"It's telling that a large number of young people who leave for university and jobs elsewhere choose to return to Ponteland when they have children of their own. It's simply a great place to live in. We moved here more than 35 years ago and I couldn't imagine living anywhere else."

The top five:

1. Harpenden, Herts; average house price £766,000
2. Cobham, Surrey; average price £1.17m
3. Beaconsfield, Bucks; average price £1.07m
4. Chorleywood, Bucks; average price £1.1m
5. Amersham, Bucks; average price £800,000

Above: Number one place to live: Harpenden in Hertfordshire.
Main pic: Colourful Coates Green in Ponteland.

Get your entry forms in for flower and craft show

Entry forms are now available for the newly rebranded Ponteland Flower and Craft Show.

The 46th annual show will this year feature a tasty new entry to the schedule – the set recipe (spiced apple and carrot cake) with other new additions including the sunflower bloom, longest runner bean and heaviest pumpkin.

Wood turned item, bottle of home brewed beer or lager, bottle of non-alcoholic cordial and flower arrangement in cup and saucer are also among the 122 prize categories this year.

The show website has been updated to include tips for those new to showing, a page on the history of the show and a copy of the event timetable.

You can download the class schedule at

pontelandflowershow.org.uk or pick up a hard copy from the library, Merton Hall, St Mary's Parish Centre and local garden centres.

Entries are welcomed from all – the more experienced to those new to showing – in the flowers, vegetables, crafts, cookery, photography, art and children's sections. There is no charge and no prize money, but the winner of the best image in the photography category will receive a year's membership to Ponteland Photographic Society.

Exhibits can be staged at the Memorial Hall between 7pm on Friday September 8 and 8am to 10.30am on Saturday September 9. The show opens to the public at 1pm on the Saturday. Ponteland Guides will be serving refreshments to raise funds for their activities.

The show is run entirely by volunteers and while entry is free, donations on



the door would be appreciated to help fund the event. Any raffle prizes would be gratefully received – organisers can be contacted at info@pontelandflowershow.org.uk.

The event is supported by Ponteland Town Council, Northumberland Freemasons, Andrew Lawson Estate Agents, Cowells and Fratelli Ristorante.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Implementation of your financial plan: a team game

By David Lamb CFP™ MCSI

In last month's column I explained why cashflow modelling should be at the core of a professionally structured financial plan. On completion of the plan, the next stage is implementation.

At this point in the process you may need to build a good team of experienced professional advisers around you, not just your financial planner.

Most financial plans are likely to include estate planning. I would strongly recommend a specialist solicitor above all others who may write wills, because they are more likely to have the experience to draft the will for complex finances or family structures.

Don't just give them instructions – a good estate planner should be

asking similar questions to your financial planner about your family, relationships, wealth etc and be prepared to work alongside your financial planner.

For those with businesses or complex tax issues, you may need to include an accountant as part of the team of advisers. We often suggest that the business should be seen as a financial asset that can either be sold at retirement or generate extra income that can be invested to provide an income in retirement. The accountant can therefore support this kind of planning. In some cases, we have brought in business coaches to provide extra support.

An issue we sometimes see with clients who should be decumulating their wealth is how they find it very difficult to change a lifetime habit of accumulating, even though they know they should be spending or gifting their money.

In most cases cashflow modelling will

provide this confidence to change, but sometimes a life coach may help to overcome any mental blocks.

When it comes to the financial advice part of the implementation, usually involving pensions and investments, products should already have been built into the plan. However, you need to be aware of the effects of the costs of establishing that product.

What are the initial costs for setting up a new product? What impact will these have on the growth of the funds? What of the ongoing fees? What are the net returns expected after all charges and inflation after the anticipated growth rates? Refer to the adviser's assumptions document. Do these charges provide value for money?

Once the implementation of the plan is complete, you can sit back and relax for 12 months before your review is due. One of the biggest disservices a financial planner (or adviser) can do for their client is to fail to carry out a review. More on this next month.



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Litter pick, trips and parties to mark Guides' 50th birthday

Community conscious girls took part in a litter pick in Ponteland Park as part of the Northumberland County Girlguiding 50th birthday celebrations.

The 40 girls collected several bags of rubbish in Ponteland Park with the support of Ponteland Town Council, which provided hi-vis jackets, litter pickers and black bags.

This followed a birthday picnic at Wallington Hall in April, with a Ranger and Guide camp being held this summer, a trip to Holy Island in September and parties happening around the county.

Units have been completing the Northumberland Girlguiding 50th Challenge badge, with one activity for each different letter of the alphabet used in 'Girlguiding Northumberland'.

These have ranged from making bird feeders and growing flowers to baking cakes, making ice cream, visiting farms, designing a uniform for 2037, teaching friends dances and having Trefoil members visit the Castle Ward unit to talk about guiding 50 years ago.

There are 110 girls in Castle Ward Division. The 6th Ponteland Rainbows (aged four to seven) meet from 6pm to 7pm on Thursday at St Mary's Parish Centre.

The 1st Stamfordham Brownies (aged seven to ten) meet from 6pm to 7.15pm on Wednesday at Stamfordham Uniting



Church, the 2nd Ponteland Brownies from 6pm to 7.30pm on Monday at Ponteland Community Primary School and the 4th Ponteland Brownies from 6pm to 7.15pm on Friday at St Mary's Parish Centre.

The 4th Ponteland Guides (aged ten to 14 years) meet from 7pm to 8.30pm on Thursday at Ponteland Community Primary School and the 6th Ponteland Guides from 7.30pm to 8.45pm on Friday at St Mary's Parish Centre (from September).

Castle Ward Rangers and Young Leaders (14 to 18 years) meet from 7.30pm to 9pm fortnightly on a Thursday at Ponteland Community Primary School.

If you would like to volunteer or register your daughter go to girlguiding.org.uk and click on Volunteer or Register your daughter.

*Hats &
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Rosie Bell is pictured with mum Kerry. Below right: Rosie in the pool and with the other triathlon competitors.



Huge smiles at the largest reason to disability triathlon

Nearly 50 children and adults with disabilities took part in a triathlon organised by Ponteland gym owner Jo Shallcross.

The Reason To Disability Triathlon, held at David Lloyd Club and Paddy Freeman's Park in Newcastle, enables competitors to complete a traditional triathlon by swimming, running and cycling with support and specially adapted equipment.

This year's field, from nine years old to adults, included Rosie Bell, 15, from Ponteland, who has cerebral palsy and dystonia.

The Ponteland High School pupil, completing her second triathlon, explained her motivation: "It's to prove a point that even though we are disabled we all can do a triathlon. I've always been like that. I don't like the fact that we can't do things. We can, but adapted, we can still do it.

"It's not the activity that really matters. It's all these kids together as a community to do something that they can do and that's amazing."

Rosie's mum Kerry added: "This is really important for Rosie's fitness. She's been working one-on-one with Jo and just got stronger and stronger. The change in her

is unbelievable and it's really important that she keeps moving.

"Rosie loves a goal. She did her first bike ride recently to raise money for her youth club and she'll be using a trike today. She's not a strong swimmer but this is about what you can do and not what you can't. And she's not frightened and will get in the pool and give it a go. She loves being involved with the whole group. They're a great bunch."

The inspirational event, once again sponsored by Team Valley-based office technology company SOS Group, took place in blazing hot sunshine on Sunday June 25 and closed with a medal ceremony with professional triathlete Dan Dixon from Morpeth as special guest.

Organised by triathletes Jo Shallcross and Tracey Sample, The Reason To Disability Triathlon began with just a handful of competitors and has grown year on year. The latest event was the largest to date.

Jo, owner of Ponteland health and fitness gym The Barn, was first inspired to organise a triathlon tailored to the individual needs of North East children after seeing a child with disabilities enjoying the event in Hawaii.

She said: "To do a triathlon is a real challenge for them because of the tiredness levels they often experience.

They could go out for a swim and that would finish them off for the day but you're asking them to swim, bike and run. But we've set it up well so they go in waves and have a break between each one with time to reenergise and get a drink."



Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



A public thank you from the Party in the Park organisers in this month's letters...

Thank you from Party in the Park organisers

Ponteland Party in the Park was a great success this year and the organisers would like to thank all the volunteers, sponsors, the local Council and everyone who attended for making it such an enjoyable event.

Whether you came as a family enabling the children to enjoy the fun fair and entertainment, you chatted with the helpers on the charity stalls, watched the various stage performances or just sat and enjoyed afternoon tea, the event provided something for the whole community to enjoy together.

To stage such an event there are many costs including the hire of marquees and toilets, installing the sound system, printing the programme and paying for the Punch & Judy show.

Appreciation gifts are given to some of the performers such as Ponteland Community Primary School Choir and Ponteland Community Wind Band. They are also given to Radio Tyneside for their service with the sound announcements and Ponteland Scouts for help and use of their facilities in the park.

Volunteers from the local Churches Together organise and facilitate the event but do not receive any financial benefit. Although the primary aim is to enable the local community to enjoy a social gathering, any funds remaining after meeting the costs are distributed to charities and local organisations, most of which benefit local people.

This year we are making donations to Age UK Northumberland, Newcastle West Foodbank, Children North East, Jill Errington's Dance School's JETS chosen charity, Ponteland Club and Institute for children's parties, Cornerstone Benwell, Northumbria Blood Bikes, Barnardo's Ponteland, Daft as a Brush, The Children's Society and Tynedale Hospice at Home.

Sunday June 9 2024 will be a special date as it is when the 20th Ponteland Party in the Park will be held. We do hope you will be able to join us then.

Alan Groves

Treasurer, Ponteland Party in the Park Organising Committee

September issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the September issue is Monday August 14. Door to door distribution will be from Tuesday August 29 to Monday September 4. 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.



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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 2 – David Roe 'Performance Poet & Comedian' and on September 6 – Linda King 'Victorian Customs and Superstitions'. We welcome enquiries from anyone wishing to join Ponteland u3a by calling the membership secretary on 01661 824953.

Ponteland WI

Visitors are most welcome to join us for our next lunch meeting at 12.15pm on Monday August 7 at Plants Plus. Our September lunch will be on Monday September 4, same time, same place. We look forward to meeting you for a nosh and natter. For our August meeting we are going to Howick for a guided tour to see the embroidered kneelers and view the gardens.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

On Monday August 14 at 2.30pm at St Mary's Parish Centre we have Alex Nelson talking on 'The Rail Travel Business'.

Ponteland Friendly Stitchers

The next meeting will be on August 21 between 2pm and 4pm at St Mary's Parish Centre. Members will enjoy an afternoon tea and a macrame earring workshop. For more information please contact emmadenham52@gmail.com.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

Sophie Webster of Northumberland WLT will give a talk on 'Harvest Mice' at 7.30pm on Tuesday September 5 at St Mary's Parish Centre. Cost £2 includes refreshments.

Ponteland Village WI

We are taking a summer break after celebrating our 10th anniversary and will meet again on Tuesday September 12 at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre. Subgroups will continue to meet. Due to the large increase in new members, we have started a waiting list. For more information, email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com. Look for Ponteland Village WI on Facebook.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We welcome area flower demonstrator Carys Harrison, whose arrangements are entitled 'Have Passport Will Travel', to our meeting at 2pm on September 13 at the CIU Club, Merton Way. All visitors welcome - fee £7. Refreshments are available in the bar.

Kirkley Carvers

Join us to chip and chat at Whalton Village Hall, NE61 3XA, on Thursdays from 1pm to 3pm. Contact Bob on 0191 267 1930 for more information.

Merton Hall library and coffee morning

Merton Hall's coffee morning and free library is now open on Fridays from 9.30am to 11.30am. Due to the generosity of residents Merton Hall cannot accept any more books at this time. We are pleased to report the free library is now full.

Ponteland Social Group

Come to our fantastic social group – a great chance for older people who live in the area to get together and enjoy friendship, a whole host of great activities, crafts, music or even just have a nice cuppa. You can find us every Wednesday from 10.30am to 12noon at St Mary's Parish Centre. Contact email friends@ageuk-northumberland.org.uk or call 01670 784800.

Ponteland Ladies Choir

We meet on Mondays, term time, at 7.30pm at Ponteland Community Primary School, Callerton Lane. We sing a wide variety of music. Please contact Susan on 07710 418780 for more details. New members welcome - no auditions required.

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

Ponteland Writers

We regularly write to prompts and also have a visiting published author for more in-depth sessions. Some of us write purely for pleasure and others have had work published. Come and join us for motivation and practice. £2 a week. We now meet

every Monday from 11am to 1pm at Ponteland Social Club in Merton Way.

Creative Writing Classes

Places currently available for one or two new members; beginners and more experienced writers are equally welcome. 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 Ponteland and Dinnington. Email Claire@claire276.plus.com for more information or to arrange a free taster session.

Ponteland Methodist Church

Sunday worship 10am and 6.30pm. First Sunday each month Bouncy Church 9am onwards - lovely breakfast, bouncy castle, crafts, all age short service 9.40am in addition to normal church service. Monday - 1pm to 4pm 'Open Door' friendship café/ warm space. Tuesday - Boys Brigade with Girls' Association. Thursday - Toddlers, Men's Forum, Women Together. Saturday - walking group and Coffee Shop Strollers. Room hire: contact anncooperx@gmail.com or call 01661 613502. For Minister Rev Jona Sewell email revjsewell@gmail.com or call 01661 822057.

Line dancing

We meet on Wednesdays at 6.30pm at St Mary's Parish Centre where we have lots of laughs, friendship and exercise to music. The cost is £3 per session. Dancing is at beginner and intermediate level. New dancers are always welcome. Free taster session offered. Contact Rosemary Gray (01661) 822493.

Rotary Ponteland

Rotary Ponteland meets at the Britannia Hotel, Newcastle Airport, each Tuesday, alternating lunchtime and evenings. The club is involved with a wide range of activities in the community, our schools and newly formed environmental group PAGE. We also organise a number of events in the village to raise funds to support local charities. If you are not able to attend regular meetings, we hold occasional Zoom meetings where you can "drop in". To learn more please visit rotaryponteland.org.uk or contact John Cooper at info@rotaryponteland.org.uk.

Ponteland Ramblers

Ponteland Ramblers is the local branch of the national charity Ramblers, dedicated to removing barriers so everyone can enjoy the pleasures of walking. We organise walks in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and north Durham led by local members. These are usually of 5-6 miles on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and longer walks every other Sunday. Why not join us - you can come on a couple of walks without any obligation to join - you will be very welcome. For details of forthcoming walks, please visit our website ramblers.org.uk/ponteland.



‘Fantastic’ support from local businesses for Duck Race

Organisers of Ponteland’s annual Duck Race event say the support from local businesses has been ‘fantastic’.

A duck sale was also recently held at Darras Hall Primary School as part of the school’s Rotakids Club to promote the event, which sees 500 ducks released on the River Pont for a series of races.

Rotary President Peter Tincombe said: “The response from local businesses to sponsor races and boats in the business boat race has been fantastic. We are hoping for fine weather and a good turnout to raise plenty of money for Children North East.”

Entry to the Park is free on the afternoon of Sunday September 3, with tickets for the duck races on sale in Waitrose Ponteland on Friday August 18 and Saturday August 19 and in the park on the day.

There will be a range of stalls in a market area, children’s rides and a climbing wall, with ice cream, hot food and drink also available.

Entry forms can be downloaded from the Rotary Ponteland website at rotaryponteland.org.uk for a ‘Spot the Duck’ competition for children from early August, with a range of character duck posters being displayed in shops and business premises throughout Ponteland and Darras Hall.

The event is once again being supported by Newcastle International Airport and sponsored for the first time by Newcastle Building Society. Ponteland Town Council has also provided a grant towards costs.

The main charity beneficiary from this year’s event will be Children North East which provides life-changing services and support to babies, children and young families.

Recruitment drive to boost Remembrance Day fundraising

It’s only August, but Ponteland Town Council is already planning for the annual Remembrance Day Parade, taking place this year on Sunday November 12.

All groups and individuals are invited to join the parade from the Leisure Centre to the War Memorial on Darras Road, where a Service of Remembrance will be held.

Anyone wanting to lay a wreath is welcome, with the first wreath being laid by one of the Deputy Lord Lieutenants of Northumberland.

A new Royal British Legion Branch - Dinnington, Ponteland and District - has recently been formed and is looking for new members and volunteers to help to sell poppies in November and to support the charity’s work. Contact community fundraiser Steve Wilson at SWilson3@britishlegion.org.uk.

Steve said: “Our branch is part of the national network

that supports the Armed Forces network. We work to raise much-needed funds to help to remember the fallen and to help to guarantee the future of the living.”

Poppies will be available to purchase in the Ponteland area. Wreaths should be ordered from the British Legion. Go to britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/ways-to-give/shop/wreaths.

The parade will leave the Leisure Centre at 10.40am, arriving at the War Memorial in good time for the two minutes’ silence at 11am. The parade returns to the Leisure Centre afterwards and everyone is invited to enjoy refreshments in the Memorial Hall after the service.



Last year’s Remembrance Day parade. Photo by Paul Norris.



Weekly banking service relocates

A weekly banking service launched last year at Ponteland Memorial Hall has been relocated to the leisure centre.

Last September, Barclays launched physical banking facilities at the Memorial Hall every Thursday in response to a call by MP Guy Opperman.

The MP had launched a campaign following the closure of branches across his constituency, including NatWest, Lloyds, HSBC and Barclays in Ponteland. He wrote to the CEOs of all four banks asking for them to consider providing more physical banking services to residents.

The service has proved very popular and the bank has announced it is moving to an office located just by the library in Ponteland Leisure Centre.

Customers visiting the facility will be able to access a wide range of services including financial reviews, balance requests, opening new accounts and support with digital banking. As the centre is a cashless site, everyday banking transactions will need to be completed at the local Post Office.

Barclays said it is committed to deploying a range of more flexible ways that customers can physically interact with the bank.

They include more than 230 pop-up banking sites in town centres and a presence in spaces such as community centres, libraries and business hubs where it offers drop in and pre-booked appointments.

Geoff Watson, Barclays Customer Care Director Northumberland and Durham, said: "We're delighted to continue the replacement banking service here in Ponteland. This represents our commitment to customers and the local community who wish to continue to have an in-person banking presence by offering the ability to visit Barclays on their local high street, albeit in a different environment."

The pop-up banking site is open at Ponteland Leisure Centre, Callerton Lane, Ponteland, NE20 9EG every Thursday from 9.30am to 12.30pm then 1pm to 4pm.

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The challenge started from outside the Diamond Inn, Ponteland and finished at the Caledonian Hotel in Princes Street, Edinburgh.

Rugby runners complete 40th anniversary challenge

Rugby club runners have just completed their 40th anniversary 100-mile run from Ponteland to Edinburgh.

Setting off in relay and tandem they completed the challenge in just over 20 hours - an impressive average of five miles an hour.

They are raising rolling funds for a new clubhouse at Ponteland Rugby Club as well as donating to the Children's Hospital at Newcastle's RVI.

The latest run was completed with seven of the original starters from the first challenge in 1983, now with an average age of 65. They were joined by nine others, including Ponteland Rugby Club President Dave Comeskey. In their younger days the route from England to the Scottish capital was competed in 11 hours 39 minutes.

Support vehicles for much needed rest and recuperation during the two-day challenge were kindly donated by Lookers Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles in Newcastle. The money for the RVI is in memory of Alastair Sym, a member of the running group for many years, who sadly passed away last year.

Andy Maidwell, still running after 40 years, said: "This time the pace was always going to be a little more sedate. It was just great to get together again, have some fun and laughs along the way, enjoy the scenery and actually get to Edinburgh."

"We had some younger ones to keep us going but some of the original group still showed remarkable endurance alongside varied levels of fitness."

"The first time we were raising money to help pay the rent of the pitch at the rugby club. Since those early days there have been big changes. We now have a new school and leisure centre in Ponteland and we are hoping a new clubhouse for the rugby club can be part of any future plans."

"Since the original challenge in 1983 we have completed the route at regular intervals, including 1993, 2003, 2013 and now the 40th anniversary in 2023. We may now hand over the baton to younger athletes."



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Caring young artist receives national award

A talented young artist who raised £1,000 in an exhibition to raise money for a friend's electric wheelchair appeal has collected a national award at the Scottish Parliament.

Jevindu Sanyuth Dissanayake was featured in the April and May issues of Pont News after selling 15 of his own paintings at the exhibition at Ponteland's Café by Design to support the appeal for Freddie Tanner-Boyer.

The five-year-old, from Greenside in Gateshead, has spinal muscular atrophy and, unable to walk, he needs an electric wheelchair as he struggles outside with his manual chair.

Family and friends launched a fundraising drive to enable the purchase of a Trekkinetic all-terrain chair which would allow Freddie to explore and join in with his friends on days out to places like the beach and forest school. But at a cost of nearly £15,000, it is not funded by the NHS.

With more than 300 donations, the appeal target has been smashed - nearly £22,000 has been raised.

Jevindu, five, of Dinnington, has become something of a local celebrity, also featuring on BBC's Look North programme.

And now the Darras Hall Primary School pupil has

picked up another accolade, after being named one of the first winners of the inaugural British Youth International College (BYITC) Inspire Awards.

Jevindu was the joint youngest among 37 award winners aged five to 17 who had excelled in a variety of fields including sports, media, art and creativity and STEM subjects. He was named Young Philanthropist in the All Rounder category.

BYITC was founded in 2015 by Glasgow-based academic and educator Dr Rashmi Mantri to help young people learn and improve their abilities in maths.

Jevindu's mum Chapa, a hospital doctor, said: "I am extremely proud of Jevindu - it's a great achievement for his age as he was shortlisted out of thousands of nominations in nine categories and only 37 little brilliant bloomers were awarded.

"We are so grateful for the appreciation of our little son Jevindu and giving a validity for his achievements. It is an acceptance for who he really is and this will motivate and encourage his little soul to do more in the future."

Don't miss out on Northumberland's energy efficiency grants

Residents who applied to the Council's Warmer Homes scheme in May this year are being asked to re-apply to avoid missing out.

The County Council is asking residents who applied between May 2 and June 16 who have not had a reply, to re-submit their application as a technical issue means they might not be registered correctly.

Households can check their eligibility and apply at nland.cc/warmerhomes.



Jevindu receives his award from Dr Rashmi Mantri, Elaine McLardy of sponsor GDK International and Leader of the Scottish Labour Party Anas Sawar.



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