

# **PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**

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5 October 2023

To: ALL MEMBERS OF PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL
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I hereby give notice that a Meeting of Ponteland Town Council will be held on **WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2023 at 6.15 p.m. IN MERTON HALL. THE MEETING WILL BE PRECEDED BY PUBLIC QUESTION TIME WHICH WILL COMMENCE AT 6.15 P.M. PLEASE NOTE IF THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS THE COUNCIL MEETING WILL COMMENCE AT 6.15 p.m.**

Yours sincerely



K MAVIN

*Clerk to the Council*

## **AGENDA**

- 58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
- 59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
- 60. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2023. Copy attached.
- 61. MATTERS ARISING
- 62. PLANNING
  - (i) Planning Committee – Minutes of meetings held on 29 August, and 12 September. Copies attached for information.
  - (ii) Report on recent planning decisions
- 63. GRANT APPLICATION
  - (i) Request from Archaeological Investigation for an Information Panel – see report attached.
- 64. NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2022-23 – Report attached.

65. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS  
The Council is requested to set up a small Working Party to carry out the annual review of the above. The membership last year comprised of Councillors Greenwell, A Hall, Mrs K Overbury and A Varley.
66. ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY – Minutes of a meeting held on 18 September are attached for consideration.
67. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT
68. MAYOR'S REPORT  
(i) Mayor's Diary - attached
69. REPORTS BY TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS
70. ACCOUNTS/BANK RECONCILIATION/BUDGET REPORT - Reports attached

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC – Councillors are asked to pass the following resolution** - That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the disclosure of the following item on the agenda as they involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of schedule 12A in the 1972 Act.

71. STAFFING COMMITTEE – Minutes of a meeting held on 27 September are attached.

62(i)

## PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Present: Councillors S Johnson (in the chair), S Ahmed, A Hall, K Woodrow & A Varley.

#### 1. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A list of planning applications received since the previous Committee meeting had been circulated.

##### 1.1 **23/02908/FUL, 28 Pembroke Drive, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9HS**

Demolish existing garage, construct side, rear and front single storey extension.

**Comment:** The Committee request that a condition can be attached to any approval for some foliage to be planted to soften the aspect which will ensure the property is more in keeping with the current street scene.

##### 1.2 **23/03014/FUL, 2 Marian Way, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9LE**

Proposed front extension: 7m high roof to form first floor bedrooms; extend single garage to form double garage; new entrance gates.

**Objection:** The Committee request that this application be refused as it is detrimental to the street scene in accordance with QOP 2 and HOU 9 of the Northumberland Local Plan and Policies PNP 2 and PNP 4 of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan. They support the objection submitted by a neighbouring property.

The Committee were awaiting additional information in respect of application 23/02275/FUL for a proposed new vehicular entrance on land at Higham Dykes and the minutes would be updated to reflect the decision made once a response had been received.

**The Committee made no comments about the other 5 applications considered.**

#### 2. DECISIONS: APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS; WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

##### 2.1 **DECISION: 23/02153/FUL, 9 Tudor Court, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9PJ.**

Proposed: Convert loft space.

**Comment** The application was **REFUSED** on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

The Committee made no comment about this application.

##### 2.2 **DECISION: 23/00905/FUL 8 Moor Lane, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9AD.**

Proposed: side extension with flat roof and courtyard infill extension with pitched roof.

**Comment** The application was **GRANTED** on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

The Committee made a comment regarding **Construction Traffic on site.**

**2.3 DECISION: 22/04681/FUL 161 Middle Drive, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9DU.**

Proposal: Extend the existing ground floor front gable upwards to first floor level, construct a second front gable at ground and first floor level, a zinc-faced dormer connecting the two front gables, a feature entrance canopy with recessed bay window, a front dormer over the existing garage and two new gables connected by another zinc-faced dormer at the rear, to include a new rear terrace accessed from the reconfigured principal bedroom suite.

**Comment** The application was **GRANTED** on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023.

**3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Committee had received correspondence relating to application 23/00494/FUL. The applicant has launched an appeal on the decision. Ponteland Town Council did not comment on this application so will not withdraw or submit further representations.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

# **PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **12<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Present: Councillors Mrs K Woodrow (in the chair), Mr S Ahmed & Mr A Hall.

#### **1. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

A list of planning applications received since the previous Committee meeting had been circulated.

Application No: **23/03210/FUL**

Location: **Land West of West Thorn West Thorn Kirkley Northumberland.**

Proposal: **Erection of farm worker's dwelling**

Applicant: **Mr F Alder**

**Comment:** The Planning Committee are aware of the history of planning applications on this site. They have concerns about building in the Greenbelt. They feel that this new application is in a slightly different location than previous ones and ask the Planning Officer to consider any implications.

**The Committee made no comments about the other 3 applications considered.**

#### **2. DECISIONS: APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS; WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS**

##### **2.1 DECISION: 23/01350/FUL South Dissington Farm Eachwick Newcastle Upon Tyne Northumberland NE18 0BN.**

Proposed: Provision of a portal frame building to be used for equestrian purposes and as a riding arena.

**Comment:** The Application was **WITHDRAWN** 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

The committee made no comment about this application.

##### **2.2 DECISION: 22/02956/ADE Lloyds Bank 5 Main Street Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9NJ.**

Proposed: Advertisement Consent for external signs positioned at front elevation. external signs to be white 3D metal letters with distressed effect.

**Comment:** This application was **GRANTED** on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

The Town Council have no comments to make on the signage itself. However, they wish to reiterate that there should be no illuminated signage within the Conservation area which is disregarded in some instances.

##### **2.3 DECISION: 23/02393/FUL 3 Larchlea, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9LG.**

Proposed: pitched roof to property; render finish to frontage and removal of existing chimney.

**Comment:** This application was **GRANTED** on 30<sup>TH</sup> August 2023.

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.4 DECISION: 23/02107/FUL 101 Eastern Way, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 FUL.**

Proposed: Existing dwellinghouse to be fully demolished and replaced by newbuild dwellinghouse.

**Comment:** This application was **GRANTED** on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.5 DECISION: 23/02899/FUL 9 Hawthorn Way, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne NE20 9RU.**

Proposed: Construction of Detached garage.

**Comment:** This application was **WITHDRAWN** on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.6 DECISION: 23/02268/FUL 82 Errington Road, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9LA.**

Proposed: Proposed bedroom over garage; single storey rear extension and entrance gates and piers.

**Comment:** This application was **GRANTED** on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.7 DECISION: 23/02437/FUL 17 Langton Court, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9AT**

Proposed: Single storey extension to rear to form family room and kitchen, with porch extension to side of garage at front and new pitched roof over existing garage.

**Comment:** This application was **WITHDRAWN** on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.8 DECISION: 23/01472/FUL 117 Western Way, Darras Hall, Ponteland, NE20 9LY.**

Proposed: Proposed rear extensions comprising first floor bedroom over existing kitchen area; single storey rear extension to create additional living space; reconfiguration of internal spaces; new porch and amendments to principal elevation.

**Comment:** This application was **GRANTED** on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.9 DECISION: 23/02081/FUL 30 Beech Court, Darras Hall, Ponteland Northumberland. NE20 9NE**

Proposed: garage extension with new tiled roof over, proposed front porch and extended driveway.

**Comment:** This application was **GRANTED** on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.10 DECISION: 23/02599/VARYCO 38 Ashdale, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland, NE20 9DR**

Proposed: Variation of Condition 3 (Approved plans) to allow an increase in size to the front ground floor extension to include a home office.

**Comment:** This application was granted on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**2.11 DECISION: 23/02102/FUL 105 Runnymede Road, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9HL**

Proposed: New front boundary wall and gates.

**Comment:** This application was **GRANTED** on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Committee objected to this application: The Planning Committee would like to object to this application. The original application 21/02225/FUL for the demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of a 2-storey house was granted on 4th August 2021. The delegated report dated 2nd August 2021 from the Planning Officer contained the following statement: The existing building line along Runnymede Road would be retained with the retention of soft landscaping to the site frontage ensuring the dwelling would be partially screened within the public domain whilst also retaining the rural aspect within this section of Darras Hall as recognised by Ponteland Town Council within their consultee comments. There would be no adverse impact caused upon the street scene. Ponteland Town Council maintain that this soft landscaping should be retained in this stretch of Runnymede Road, as included in the recommendations from the original Planning Officer and wish to object to the proposal to replace the hedging with a boundary wall and gates.

**2.12 DECISION: 23/02220/FUL 15 Callerton Court, Darras Hall, Ponteland, Northumberland. NE20 9EN.**

Proposed single storey first floor extension to the rear, link extension between dwelling and garage, internal reconfiguration works, demolition of front extension and replace with single storey extension with balcony above.

**Comment** This application was **REFUSED** on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023

The Committee made no comment about this application.

**3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Committee deferred a decision from the previous meeting as they were awaiting further information and have subsequently submitted the following objection:

Application No: **23/02275/FUL**

Location: **Land at Higham Dykes Milbourne, Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland. NE20 0DH**

Proposal: Proposed new vehicular entrance from land directly onto A696 crossing grass verge

Applicant: Mr David Marc Dixon

**OBJECTION** - The Planning Committee is concerned at the proximity of a new access road proposed at this fast section of the A696. There is dense hedging and mature trees at this point as well as narrow steep verges. There have been a number of fatalities in the past close to this section of the A696 and the Committee request that the Planning Authority take this into account when considering the application. The application makes no mention of the reason for the new entrance to the field or to the area blocked in red which is green belt and the Planning Committee hope that this is not for the erection of a residential property in the future.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023**



**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**

**Agenda item number 63(i)**

**Report by Clerk to the Council**

**Report to October 2023 Council meeting**

**Report re request for funding for Ponteland Schools and Leisure**

**Archaeological Investigations Information Panel**

A request has been received from Archaeological Research Services Limited for funding for an Information Panel relating to investigations carried out on the site of the Ponteland Leisure Centre when a discovery was made of human burials and cremations.

They have been asked by the County Archaeologist for NCC to look at producing an information panel which would detail the work done by the organisation to be installed either in the school, leisure centre or library. Archaeological Research Services Limited have approached the Town Council as the NCC County Archaeologist does not have the funds available to produce this item.

This request was first discussed at the agenda meeting for the September TC meeting when the Clerk was asked to go back to the company asking for more detail.

Further information has been received and it is anticipated that the design and production of a digital file that can then be printed on to a board costing £500 (net). The material that the panel would be made of, how it was erected and therefore the associated costs could vary widely. Printing on to an A1 Foamex/Correx board, for example, only costs around £50 and there are some very cost-effective mounting solutions, including just affixing it to a wall with screws.

A much more expensive option would be a panel mounted on a plinth outside, maybe near the entrance to the Leisure Centre/Library. A link to an example of this is set out below. This comes with a 10-year guarantee when used externally under normal light and weather conditions:

[https://www.greenbarnes.co.uk/shop/signage/lecterns/a1-man-made-timber-interpretation-panel-ref-pipa1/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIzLbigZmngQMVCOTtCh0tpgQqEAQYASABEgK-MPD\\_BwE](https://www.greenbarnes.co.uk/shop/signage/lecterns/a1-man-made-timber-interpretation-panel-ref-pipa1/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIzLbigZmngQMVCOTtCh0tpgQqEAQYASABEgK-MPD_BwE)

Regarding the location, the County Archaeologist does not have a preference for where it should go. Some suggestions are set out above and it is understood the company also want to discuss a possible location with the school.

A copy of an article which gives more detail about the archaeological find is attached to this report.

Members are requested to consider whether they wish to fund the information panel at an approximate cost of £550 (if the indoor option is agreed). If agreed, it is suggested that this should be in principle as the site is not yet known. The Council may also wish to state that they will not be responsible for any damage, maintenance or replacement in future.



**Recommendation – The Council is asked to consider the request set out above.**

Attachment – Article from Current Archaeology magazine entitled '*Ponteland's Prehistoric Past*'.

# Ponteland's prehistoric past

## Tracing life and death on the edge of the Northumberland Coastal Plain

Recent excavations on the south-western part of the Northumberland Coastal Plain have revealed an early Bronze Age ring-ditch with a remarkable sequence of human burials. **Milena Grzybowska**, who analysed the human remains, reports on this discovery and other prehistoric features in its immediate vicinity.

**B**efore the Roman conquest and the subsequent construction of Hadrian's Wall, the lowland area north of the River Tyne was a densely settled agrarian landscape. A number of Iron Age sites have been recorded during developer-funded excavations on the Northumberland Coastal Plain since the early 2000s. Many were abandoned by the 2nd century AD, and they revealed little information about the nature of settlement prior to the mid-1st millennium BC (see CA 277).

An important addition to this picture emerged during our investigations ahead of the redevelopment of Ponteland Leisure Centre. This site

is located beside the Fairney Burn (a tributary of the River Blyth), 12km north-west of Newcastle, 7km north of Hadrian's Wall, and is the site of a late prehistoric enclosure complex identified by geophysical survey. Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Kier Group plc to excavate an area of c.2.6ha in advance of upgrading the Centre and developing its outdoor facilities. The archaeological work, undertaken in autumn 2019, proved very productive. As well as uncovering the remains of two Iron Age enclosures, our excavations revealed an early Bronze Age ring-ditch. Although this was heavily truncated by later ploughing and the creation of a trench for a modern electricity

cable (which ran through it), we were able to document six burials and the remains of structures and other features relating to potential domestic or further funerary activity, both prior to and potentially associated with the development of the ring-ditch. ➔

**OPPOSITE** Excavations on the site of Ponteland Leisure Centre, 12km north-west of Newcastle, revealed an early Bronze Age ring-ditch associated with six burials. The primary inhumation was the grave of a female adolescent, shown here at sunrise. **BELOW** Overlooking the remains of the early Neolithic structure identified on the site, as well as the early Bronze Age ring-ditch (the primary grave can be seen in its centre). The unexcavated sections of the ring-ditch are where a modern electricity cable runs through the monument.







**LEFT** This plan shows the prehistoric features excavated at Ponteland Leisure Centre during Archaeological Research Services Ltd's investigations on the site.

Beaker period, a part of the very early Bronze Age that saw considerable population change in Britain (see CA 338) and the arrival of people from the Continent using distinctive pottery vessels that give the cultural phenomenon its name. About 35m east of the early Neolithic structure, we found a pit containing abraded fragments from a Beaker vessel, flint flakes, and a charred barley grain that was radiocarbon dated to 2398-2146 BC. This is a useful addition to our understanding of the Beaker period in this region: recent excavations at Cheviot Quarry (CA 207), as well as at St George's Hospital near Morpeth, located about 15km north-east of Ponteland, have produced further Beaker pits, while coastal sites such as Ambleside and Low Hauxley just over 30km to the north-east show that settlement of this period was spreading over the coast and its hinterland, as well as in core lowland areas previously exploited by Neolithic populations.

Indeed, this wider distribution of Beaker burials and domestic activity, combined with the recovery of Beaker remains from Ponteland, indicates that settlement during the later 3rd millennium BC was beginning to expand from the Northumberland coast and river valleys into the upland areas of the surrounding landscape.

## BURIALS BEGIN

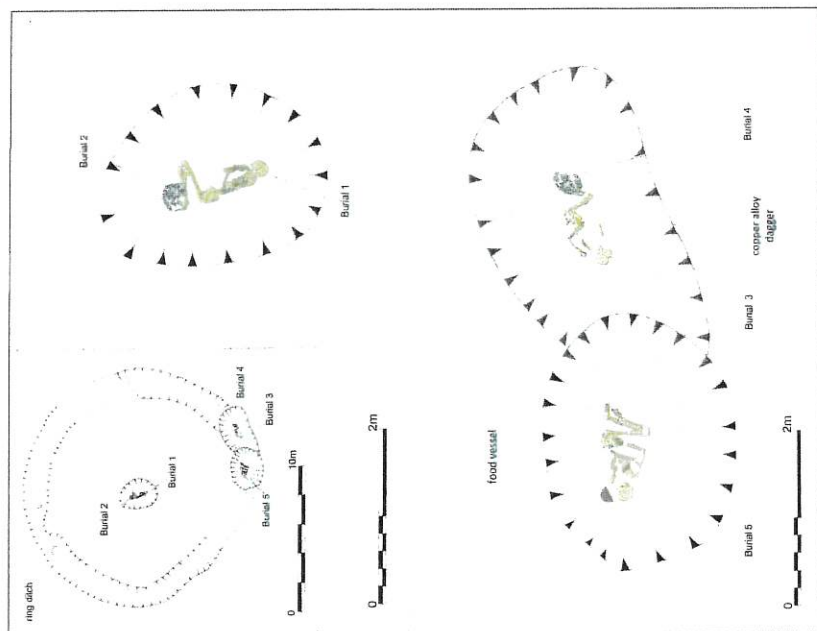
At the turn of the 2nd millennium BC, a female adolescent (Burial 1) was laid to rest at the base of an oval pit. She was around 15 years old at the time of her death, which radiocarbon dating indicates occurred c.2026-1896 BC. At a later date a younger child (Burial 6) was buried within the upper part of the backfill of her grave, disturbing fragments of a Beaker vessel that might have been associated with the initial interment. The pit was surrounded by

interment. The pit was surrounded by

## EARLY ACTIVITY

The oldest features encountered at the site represent the early Neolithic period, including a sub-rectangular structure dating to the first quarter of the 4th millennium BC. Measuring approximately 7m by at least 5.5m, it had been built with close-set timber posts set in a construction slot, and a piece of charred oak from one of the wall posts was radiocarbon dated to 3947-3715 BC. A nearby pit contained fragments from portions of three Carnated Bowl vessels deposited in separate places within the fill. Taken together, these remains extend the known location of early Neolithic activity in Northumberland south of the well-known traces in the river valleys of the northern and central parts of the county – and the Ponteland structure is

of activity at the site takes us to the



**HIGHT** This plan shows the layout of the ring-ditch and the arrangement of burials 1-5. A sixth burial, containing the disturbed and disarticulated remains of a c.9-year-old child, was inserted into the upper backfill of Burial 1 in 1869-1621 BC.

a penannular-shaped ring-ditch (that is, a circle with a small portion missing from its circumference), across which an entrance causeway allowed easy access to the central area. The female adolescent had been carefully placed to face this entranceway, lying on her right side in a flexed position. By analysing her skeleton, we can tell that she was relatively tall for an early Bronze Age female from northern England (and still growing), but we can also see multiple signs of trauma suffered before and around the time of her death. As well as possible spine and hip injuries, she had suffered a basilar skull fracture (that is, a break to a bone in the base of her skull) at around the time of her death which probably led to a traumatic brain injury and premature death. As to how this may have happened, signs of blunt-force trauma to her cranium,

**BELOW** The primary inhumation (Burial 1) was situated at the centre of the ring-ditch, with the cremated remains of a second individual (Burial 2) lying over her feet.



mandible, neck, first rib, and left shoulder girdle point to a high-impact trauma that was most likely due to a high-energy fall on to the left side of her head and shoulder – either a fall from a considerable height or when travelling at speed.

Over the young girl's feet we found the cremated remains of an adult (Burial 2) radiocarbon dated to 2114-1905 BC. As the burnt bone fragments were extremely compact, they had probably been deposited in a bag of some sort, or wrapped in leather or fabric. Traces of bluish-green staining indicated the presence of a copper or copper-alloy object towards the right shoulder-blade (subsequently confirmed by X-ray fluorescence analysis),





**RIGHT** The occupant of Burial 3 was found with a copper-alloy dagger at their waist and the cremated remains of another individual (Burial 4) at their feet.  
**ABOVE** A close-up of the Burial 3 dagger.

suggesting that this individual had either been cremated, or their remains placed in the grave, accompanied by a metal ornament, pin, or another form of clothing fastener. Burials of this nature are known elsewhere in Northumberland, for example at the Tankerville Arms Hotel, Wooler, where the crouched remains of a woman had been placed in a short cist c.2140-1971 BC, with the cremated remains of two other individuals lying over her legs. It is not known, however, whether Burials 1 and 2 had died at the same time, or if the cremated adult's death preceded that of the adolescent, with their remains being kept until they were later placed within the ring-ditch.

Around the same time that these individuals were buried, a rectangular post-built structure was erected immediately to the south of the ring-ditch – a charred sedge seed from one of the post-holes yielded a date

### THE DAGGER BURIAL

of 2133-1938 BC. Within and close to the building, four pits produced a small quantity of flint debitage, a knife fragment, and a thumbnail scraper, while the fills of the ring-ditch itself and some of the features associated with the structure yielded charred wheat and barley grains, as well as sedge seeds, suggesting that cereal agriculture had probably taken place nearby at this time. The structure may not have been agricultural in function, however – while its precise purpose remains unknown, we suggest it could be associated with the adjacent funerary activity, perhaps representing the foundations of a charnel house. Alternatively, it could have been used by the living, perhaps as part of a domestic settlement. Farms, fields, and funerary monuments built at a family scale were established by the early 2nd millennium BC in upland areas, for example in the neighbouring Cheviot Hills, where such landscapes are well-preserved.

however. In this case, Burial 3 was positioned to face south, and they had a copper-alloy dagger placed at their waist.

The dagger blade was formed by the light forging of a cast blank produced from a two-piece mould. XRF analysis indicated that it was made from tin bronze that is likely to contain around 10% tin. Traces of arsenic and lead were

**LEFT** The dagger blade, with three intact rivets, during conservation.



**ABOVE** Burial 5 contained an adult woman who had been laid in an oval pit alongside the grave containing Burials 3 and 4.  
**LEFT** The woman was accompanied by a Vase Food Vessel, which had been placed next to her skull.

detected, while zinc was identified in 50% of the samples for the blade but not in the rivets, and traces of nickel were noted in the rivets but not the blade. The apparent difference between the rivets and blade suggests they are not from the same source of metal and may indicate the range of materials available to the smith when finishing the artefact. The tin readings, coupled with the presence of arsenic and the absence of nickel in the blade, may indicate a Continental source. The blade is best classed as a 'butt riveted' type, a later development than tang-and-shoulder riveted daggers, and the presence of three intact rivets indicates that the dagger originally had a hilt made from a perishable organic material. Burials with daggers occur elsewhere in north-east England, as well as clustering in east-central Scotland, and the Ponteland dagger is typical of other examples from the surrounding region, for example that found c.25km to the west at Reaverhill. Although the biological sex of Burial 3's

### LATER BURIALS

Within a relatively short period, a third grave was dug into the south side of the ring-ditch, partly cutting into the west side of Burial 2. This contained the remains of a woman aged 36-45, who had again been placed on her right side in a flexed position. Dubbed Burial 5 and dated to 2022-1828 BC, she was accompanied by the fragmented remains of a squat Vase Food Vessel decorated with twisted cord impressions (placed above her skull), together with a copper or copper-alloy object by her right shoulder-blade. Only preserved in the form of bluish-green staining confirmed by XRF analysis, it may have been a metal ornament, pin, or something similar used to fasten clothing such as a cloak or dress in place at the shoulder. As for the remains of the woman herself,

it appears that she had suffered from a form of sinusitis, albeit apparently not stemming from a tooth infection. Such conditions are rarely identified in an early Bronze Age context, but could have been due to excessive exposure to pollutants – for example, by inhaling wood smoke inside a poorly ventilated structure – or by transmission of infectious diseases. We could also see degenerative changes to her spine and left elbow, while her cranium showed evidence of blunt-force trauma, sustained around the time of death.

The food vessel accompanying this woman is illuminating, too. Beaker-period graves (both primary inhumations and secondary burials) associated with Vase Food Vessels have been recorded at many other barrows or cairns in north-east England, for example at Hastings Hill, located about 25km south-east of Ponteland, and at Low Hauxley. Dagger burials, as at Ponteland, are rarely associated with Beaker vessels, however – something that has been suggested to represent divergent social networks, with different people connected by their use of tin-bronze blades versus those using Beakers. At Ponteland, the ring-ditch was still visible as a burial monument when the dagger burial was interred, but the relationship of the monument with Beakers and Beaker users could possibly have disappeared, perhaps after a short period of it being abandoned.

This could echo a pattern seen more widely, where secondary burials accompanied by Food Vessels are known to have been inserted into or added to pre-existing Beaker period cairns in the region, such as at Low Hauxley. Such a pattern might reflect cultural or ideological change occurring in the early Bronze Age, alongside the emergence of different social networks or groupings after the initial Beaker phase. Having said this, we can also see an important element of continuity in mortuary practices at Ponteland, seen between the Beaker and dagger graves: both



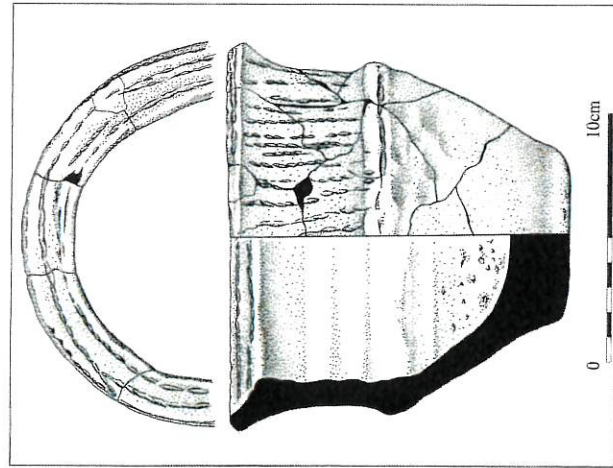


**ABOVE** The upper portion of the Vase Food Vessel from Burial 5, reassembled and viewed from above.  
**ABOVE RIGHT** Jenny Doole's drawing shows its full extent.

burials had a flexed primary inhumation with a sequentially later cremation burial laid over the feet, thereby demonstrating a commonality between these burial types through time.

The presence of copper or copper-alloy artefacts with the cremations, along with the dagger, suggests contacts with Bronze Age groups beyond north-east England, perhaps reaching as far as the Continent. The Ponteland community clearly had access to regional and inter-regional networks, whether by direct trade or down-the-line exchange. Such widespread connections could also have been the cause of the probably fatal blunt-force trauma seen in two of the burials, however – these might be echoes of interpersonal violence hinting at a time of heightened socio-political stress, perhaps ultimately linked to the arrival of Beaker-using people into Britain at this time.

And what of Burial 6, which we mentioned briefly near the start of this



article? This contained the remains of a child around 9 years old, whose sex could not be determined. The skeleton was disturbed (probably by ploughing) and disarticulated, but can be dated to 1869–1621 BC. This burial had been dug into the upper part of the backfill of Burial 1, and was the final burial within the ring-ditch for which evidence survived, but there may have been others. At the centre of Burial 5 was an oval pit that had been dug at a later date, and from its fill we recovered a fragment of a flint knife. Could this have been the base of a grave for another secondary interment, similar to Burial 6?

#### IRON AGE ENDINGS

If there were no further burials following the creation of Burial 6, the ring-ditch seems to have been neglected after this point, continuing to silt up. Indeed, other than possibly being used as pastureland, the site appears to have seen no further activity until the 1st millennium BC, when a farmstead, represented by at least four small circular structures (one of which yielded Iron Age pottery), was established to the north of the burials.

This was followed by the construction of a rectilinear enclosure surrounded by a timber palisade, the western half of which was centred on the location of the ring-ditch, perhaps indicating that traces of this monument were still evident at that time. Meanwhile, the north-western portion of the enclosure appears to have been deliberately designed to curve around one of the earlier circular structures.

Within the enclosure we found the remains of further structures: in the centre and north-eastern sections there were two structures, possibly representing domestic buildings dating to the Middle Iron Age (judging by pottery recovered from features associated with the north-eastern example), while the south-east corner boasted two more, possibly contemporary, structures. The replacement of unenclosed settlements by rectilinear enclosed farmsteads during the Middle-Late Iron Age has been recorded at a number of other excavated later prehistoric sites in this part of north-east England, such as at West Brunton (6km to the south-west of Ponteland) and Pegswood



**ABOVE** Recording Iron Age features situated in the northern part of the site, Moor, near Morpeth (about 15km to the north-east).

This enclosure would soon greatly expand, as a second was added to its north-western side, increasing the total area delineated from c.5,200m<sup>2</sup> to c.8,000m<sup>2</sup>. It is difficult to say what took place within this space, due to a distinct lack of animal bone (probably due to the acidic nature of the subsoil) and low presence of ancient plant or pollen remains, but the funnel-like shape of the second enclosure and the absence of internal structures or domestic items like quern-stone fragments within it might be instructive. We suggest that the second enclosure probably functioned as a broad driveway for corralling livestock from pasture in the north towards the southern enclosure. It appears that both enclosures continued in use for livestock management until the settlement was abandoned, probably by the end of the 1st millennium BC.

As for who might have used these features, by the 2nd century BC, the Northumberland Coastal Plain was mainly occupied by rectilinear

enclosures with substantial ditches and a single east-facing gateway, along with unenclosed or more lightly enclosed roundhouse settlements. The substantially ditched enclosures are thought to be associated with the upper echelons of Iron Age society, while other settlements may represent subordinate groups – it is thought that the Ponteland farmstead could be an example of this latter category.

Although medieval and more recent ploughing has truncated the uppermost part of most features and deposits on the site, erasing evidence of later activity, it is fortunate that most of the early Bronze Age graves were deep enough for skeletal remains to survive, revealing the sequence and funerary diversity of the burials associated with the ring-ditch. We hope that soon we will be able to say even more about the individuals buried at Ponteland: aDNA analysis is currently being undertaken by the Francis Crick Institute, while stable isotopic analysis is being carried out by Durham University. Together, it is hoped that these will reveal information regarding the ancestry,

geographic origins, and the diet of the individuals associated with the ring-ditch. ■

#### Further information

A report on the excavations at Ponteland Leisure Centre is due to be published in *Archaeologia Aeliana*.

#### Source

Milena Grzybowska is Osteoarchaeologist/Senior Project Officer at Archaeological Research Services Ltd and has worked with the company since 2015. She has excavated archaeological sites in England and Eastern Europe, and has reported on animal- and human-bone assemblages from multi-period sites in Britain.

#### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist at Northumberland County Council, and Don O'Neale, Historic England Science Advisor for North East England and Hadrian's Wall, for their advice and support. The archaeological team, who endured winter weather to complete the excavation, comprised David Cockcroft, Rachel Lightfoot, Rupert Lotherington, Michael Nicholson, Mark Potter, Ana Rodrigues, and Ian Walker.

**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Report by Clerk to the Council**  
**Report to October 2023 Council meeting**  
**Annual Audit 2022-23**

**Agenda item number 64**

The required information re the above was sent to the external auditors, Mazars on 27 June 2023.

The External Auditors Report and Certificate for 2022-23 was received on 26 September 2023. A copy of the Certificate is attached. A copy of sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR are also attached.

The external auditors, Mazars had no matters to raise with the Town Council although they did note that box 11a in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been left blank. This was raised as a minor issue for internal reporting only as they did agree that the answer could be inferred from the other answers on the AGAR. However, the Council was asked to ensure that all boxes were filled in, marking nil or not applicable where appropriate.

The required information was put on display on notice boards for a period of 14 days from the 27 September and it is also on the Town Council's website. The information had to be published before 30 September 2023.

**Recommendation – The Council is recommended to approve and accept the External Auditors Report and Certificate for 2022-23 and sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR.**

Attachments –

Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Annual Return (AGAR)  
External Auditor Report and Certificate 2022-23 (Section 3)



## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

**Ponteland Town Council**

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		*Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

14/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

26(ii)

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clerk

[www.ponteland-tc.gov.uk](http://www.ponteland-tc.gov.uk)



## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

### Ponteland Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	602,146	673,859	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	429,096	445,180	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	65,153	79,274	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	112,393	112,356	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	310,143	332,390	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	673,859	753,567	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	671,509	749,924	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	529,069	525,928	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

05/06/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

14/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

26(iii)

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved





## Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

**Ponteland Town Council**

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>.

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

### 2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

Not applicable

### 3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

\*We do not certify completion because:

Not applicable

External Auditor Name

**Mazars LLP, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1DF**

External Auditor Signature

*Mazars LLP*

Date

**26 September 2023**

**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT  
THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**

**Present:** Councillors C Greenwell, S Ahmed, K Overbury and K Wilson

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor N Sehgal.

**2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 24 JULY 2023**

The Minutes were accepted.

**3. SPREADSHEET REPORTS**

**(i) Report covering three main priorities of EWP for 2022-23**

**(1) Rockery on Main Street.**

This area would continue to be maintained.

**(2) Sensory garden**

The gardening contractor had suggested some planting of Lavender, Buddlia and Lilacs. Members did not want Lavender to be planted.

They asked if a lot of the planting could be cleared out before planting the above.

The Chair asked if the gardening contractor could be asked for advice about the what could be done re the pavements which were not in good condition. The Clerk agreed to raise this with him.

**(3) Project for resurfacing the path between Callerton Lane and Waitrose bridge**

The order had been placed for the work with NCC. A start date was awaited.

The Chair suggested putting some projects on hold whilst one of the contractors was unable to work. This was agreed.

**(ii) Report re items discussed at previous meetings**

**(1) and (2) Allotments and new tenancy agreement**

The Clerk reported that she had written to tenants in the previous week outlining the amendments that had been made to the proposed agreement that had been agreed by the Council.

She had received three replies to date.

The Clerk planned to send out the new agreement by post to all tenants later in the week.

**(4) Ash trees in the Park**

The Clerk reported that she had received quotes for urgent work inside and outside of the park however, both companies had stated that they would be unable to do the work until later in the year. She had contacted the tree consultant again to ask his advice and he had suggested a further company who had capacity to do the work. She would be contacting the companies who had quoted to let them know.

The Chair asked about disposal of the wood which the Clerk said she would discuss with the contractor. Usually, the contractor would sell it on or piles would be left for people to take away. However, the wood from the diseased trees may not have any value.

Councillor Wilson mentioned a community wood bank in the county who could be contacted about taking the wood.

**(5) Remedial work at the Pele tower**

The Clerk had arranged a site visit with a company who specialised in restoration of historic building and monuments.

### **(iii) Watching brief items**

There was no progress on the replacement letters for the tree guards.

The gardening contractor had provided photos of where the coronation tree could go in the park however, there was some confusion and the Clerk was asked to obtain more information.

## **4. CORRESPONDENCE**

### **(i) Request from resident of North Road to move the litter bin on the junction with Pont View**

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from a resident of North Road (via NCC) asking that the bin that was recently installed on the Jackson Avenue/Pont View junction be moved. The bin had been installed following multiple requests from another resident.

A photo of the area was included in the report.

The area had been measured and the bin was 2.8 metres away from the seat. The tarmac underneath the bin had been cut away to allow the bin to be fixed to paving. This would require reinstatement if the bin was moved.

It was agreed – That the request be refused as it was felt the bin was far enough away from the seat not to cause a nuisance.

### **(ii) Query received re 'no ball games' sign at green next to Jackson Avenue**

This query had also been received via NCC. The correspondent had asked about the legality of 'no ball games' signs as there were problems with children kicking a ball against a neighbours fence.

The Clerk had investigated this and found that the signs had no legal standing. They were advisory and, in many cases, councils had removed the signs altogether as they could not be enforced.

The Clerk had written to the correspondent and advised them of the situation.

### **(iii) Request from resident of Jameson Manor for donations in kind towards planting of bulbs, seeds etc at this location**

The Clerk had been approached by a resident of the above estate asking if it was possible to have donations of bulbs and seeds.

It was agreed – That if there were surplus items available following planting these could be donated to Jameson Manor.

## **5. Oxbow Lake – clearance**

The Clerk reported that there was funding in the budget for clearance of the above area.

In view of the area being fenced off the Clerk asked if she should proceed with the order for the work.

Members felt it was important from a safety point of view as the weed at times disguised the water underneath. The Clerk was asked to proceed with this work.

It was also reported that the Northumberland Rivers Trust had offered to suggest a simpler solution to the destroyed dipping platform and it was agreed this should be progressed. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for removal of what was left in that area.

It was agreed –

(i) That the pond clearance work be carried out which was included in the budget for 2023-24.

(ii) That the Clerk seek quotes from companies to remove the remains of the dipping platform.

## **6. Allotment**

### **(i) Request to divide allotment**

A request had been received from the tenant of plot 12c to divide their allotment into two either width ways or diagonally. Members agreed to this request.

## **7. Report re FOPP**

The Clerk reported on recent contact with the Friends of the Park. She referred to problems with the ability to do work at the wildflower meadow and also some proposals that had been raised by the Chair. There were some concerns re the suggestion of additional trees being planted in conjunction with another group in Ponteland, when at present, the Clerk was trying to arrange to have diseased trees removed.

## **8. Any other business**

### **(i) Request for bin at Ashbrooke Drive**

The Clerk reported that she had been contacted by the MP's office asking whether a decision had been made regarding a request that had been received last year.

The Clerk had apologised that the outcome of the discussions had not be relayed back to the MP. She reminded members that the request had been refused due to the cluster of bins available in that area.

The applicant had contacted the MP again asking if the bin from Twizell play area could be moved to the suggested area and if not, could the decision of the Town Council be appealed.

The Clerk reported that it was a dual-purpose bin in the play area which was much used and could not be moved.

She suggested asking the gardening contractor/NCC if there was a bin nearby that could be moved to this location.

### **(ii) Update re Waitrose bridge**

The Clerk was asked for an update re the above.

She said she had been in touch with the footpaths officer at NCC who had inspected the structure and whilst he recognised the surface was worn, he did not believe it was a hazard. As the structure belonged to NCC the Town Council could not carry out work there without permission and at present, there was not the manpower to do this. The Northumberland Rivers Trust were going to be carrying out work in the near future at this location.

### **(ii) Suggestion re notice board at Jameson Manor**

Councillor Wilson asked about the possibility of having a noticeboard at Jameson Manor.

After some discussion it was suggested that the gardening contractor be asked to look at suitable locations on site. If approved, permission from the landowner would be required.

## **12. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Monday 27 November 2023 at 10.00 am. at the Town Council offices.

**PONTELAND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Report by the Mayor**  
**Report to October 2023 Council meeting**

**Agenda item number 68(i)**

**Mayor's report October 11, 2023**

Meetings and events attended by Coun Karen Overbury representing Ponteland Town Council since the last meeting of the full Council (September 13, 2023).

Please ask if you want further information.

**Thursday, September 14**

Town and Parish Councils Liaison meeting

– via Zoom.

**Friday, September 22**

Morpeth and District Scouts agm and presentations evening

– Morpeth Town Hall.

**Thursday, October 5**

Annual Town and Parish Councils Conference

– Northumberland County Council County Hall, Morpeth.