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revamp design brief...
...how you responded to
the big survey***

***Artwork brings farm animals
back to Ponteland***

***Happy memories for
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***Under-13s win county
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Sunday 10th June - 10-4pm

Booking is essential for the above events For more information or to make a reservation please contact our Operations Team on: Tel: 01670 841235 Email: hg.kirkley@northland.ac.uk

Village school remembers more than 90 years of history

Fond memories as former pupils pay last visit

By Muriel Sobo

More than 90 years of history were celebrated as former pupils enjoyed a final visit to Ponteland First School before it closed its doors for the last time last month.

Current pupils will be excitedly turning up for lessons at their brand new £6m building next door as *Pont News* hits the streets in mid-April.

But an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia brought back the memories for many former scholars.

Some families in the village have seen three generations go to this school. Michael Taylor, a retired engineer from Prestwick, was one of those checking the admissions register to find his father, Stanley, who was admitted in 1921. Michael was a pupil in 1953 and his sons Christopher and Neil were there in the 1970s.

Ella Pears, who celebrates her 90th birthday this month, went to school aged five in the 1920s. The family lived at Berwick Hill and Ella, along with her older sister, walked to school and back every day. They carried sandwiches and a bottle of tea, which kept warm on the stove in the master's room.

Mr Carr was the headmaster and the teacher Mrs Renwick. Ella is fourth from the left on the back row.

The school opened the same month that war was declared in August

1914. It was untroubled by world events then, but there was considerable disruption during the second world war.

When war was declared plans were put into action for the evacuation of children, and evacuees from

Wallsend and Cowgate, with their teachers, had to be accommodated in Ponteland.

This meant that school was in two sessions, one in the morning for the evacuees and another in the afternoon for the villagers.



Michael Taylor enjoys the photographic exhibition



Ponteland First School in the 1920s

Public meeting to launch new civic society

By Muriel Sobo

Ponteland is changing, probably faster than at any time in its history.

There are concerns that some of the proposed changes may not be in keeping with our rich heritage and that we may lose the village character which we still value and enjoy.

Within our community there is a deep sense of civic pride and involvement, which has been revealed recently when many residents have expressed their views at public meetings and through the Press.

The formation of civic societies is encouraged by the Civic Trust, a national body, where residents who wish to protect their environmental, architectural and historic heritage, and promote sustainable improvement and development can come together.

An inaugural public meeting to found the Ponteland Civic Society is arranged for Monday April 30 at St Mary's Parish Hall at 7.30pm.

The meeting will be addressed by Henry Warne, who is Chairman of both the Morpeth Civic Society and the North East Federation of Civic Trust Societies. All interested residents are invited to attend.



One of Ponteland's jewels Coates Green earlier this month

Runnymede Road plan could get green light

Plans to replace a bungalow on Darras Hall's Runnymede Road with a two storey home complete with swimming pool and orangery have been backed by planners.

There have been three neighbouring objections to the UK Land Estates scheme proposed for no. 119, which boasts a 'very large' 0.55 hectare plot concealed from the road frontage by a drive between neighbouring properties.

The report to this month's borough development services committee said: "The proposed siting of the two-storey dwelling is at least 45 metres from the nearest dwellings on Sandringham Way and the proposed dwelling is centrally sited within the large flat plot.

"The proposed screening to the north and east of the sites will overcome any potential privacy issues raised in the neighbour objections."

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Farm animals return to Ponteland

M-artwork at new housing development

By Muriel Sobo

The mart is closed but the animals are back in the village.

The return of cows and sheep can be seen in the Meadow Dale development by Bett Homes off the West Road.

More than forty houses have been built on what was the mart field, or lairage, and they are separated by a 12 feet high acoustic wall from the adjacent industrial area.

Some clever, innovative art has been done in two places to break up the monotony of this wall.

Special bricks were fired with a white gloss finish and then the pictures of cows and sheep added.

The editor, apparently, was planning to rename this issue Pont News and Moos, to reflect the cover shot, but thankfully thought better of it!

Sheep and cattle welcome new residents and visitors to Meadow Vale



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Latest NEWS from Ponteland Parish Council



This report is based on the minutes from the Parish Council meeting held on March 8.

PUBLIC QUESTION

The following question was submitted: "In view of the total rejection by Ponteland residents of the selection of Option 4 for the regeneration of Ponteland village, will the Council withdraw their commitment to this option by vote?"

The Chairman replied that he saw no reason for the Parish Council to change its views at this stage. The Parish Council was not the lead body in relation to the proposals – this was led by Ponteland Community Partnership, which was awaiting the results of the survey, which had to be collated and analysed and would be published in *Pont News & Views*.

The proposals for the Library in Ponteland were also awaited from Northumberland County Council. The Parish Council decided to state its opinion for the preferred option 4 and the decision was taken democratically and was supported by members of both political groups.

The Chairman also stated that the Masterplan had made no difference to Merton Way and had not created a planning blight. The shops and services were still operating as before. One business had changed hands and continues to trade.

The Chairman thanked the questioner for the question but stated that he saw no reason for the Parish to change its mind.

PLANNING

Report on recent planning decisions

The Chairman reported on the following:

53 Edgehill - proposed erection of four dwellings - refused.

4-6 Main Street - conversion of offices to restaurant - refused.

32 The Crescent - replacement dwelling - refused.

APPLICATION FOR GRANT

Ponteland United Football Club

A grant of £250 was approved, to go towards the purchase of strips and warm-up tops. It was also agreed to award the remainder of the funds available for grants in the sum of £125 to Castle Morpeth Citizens Advice Bureau.

NORTHUMBERLAND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

A copy of the document *Releasing the Strength of our Communities – A sustainable community strategy for Northumberland to 2021*, the final draft version, was available in the Parish Office for perusal.

NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

The Association's response to possible local government reorganisation

The above document was circulated for information.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Broadway Shopping Centre

The Council is to write again to the Agents expressing the Council's concern and requesting they consider assisting in funding the proposed environmental improvements for the land fronting the shops, once the scheme for this area has been decided upon.

Hanging Basket Scheme

The Council accepted the quotation of £196 for 40 Spring hanging baskets (April & May) and the quotation of £4,160 for 110 Summer hanging baskets (June - end September). Four extra baskets would be ordered (two for the Police Station and two for Merton Hall).

CASTLE MORPETH BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT

Castle Morpeth Sustainable Community Strategy

A copy of the above mentioned document was available in the Parish Office. Any comments had to be submitted by March 23.

The Mayoress's Grand Charity Ball

It was reported that the Ball would be held on April 14 at the Riverside Leisure Centre, Morpeth – tickets cost £30 each.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Northumberland Sport

A copy of the above mentioned document was available in the Parish Office for perusal if required.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON RECENT EVENTS

Meeting with Northumbria Police – February 19

A meeting with the Inspector for this area had taken place on 19 February. This had been a useful meeting and it had been confirmed that crime figures for this area had reduced. It was reported that the Inspector had recently been promoted and was no longer responsible for Ponteland.

Ponteland Community Partnership

The Chairman reported on his attendance at the above. He stated that a new distributor for *Pont News & Views* had been appointed and it was hoped that this would solve the non-delivery issues.

REPORTS BY PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Mrs S E J Campbell reported that the Merton Hall AGM would be held on April 16 at 2pm.

Dormer plan for Darras street set for refusal

Plans to build a dormer style dwelling in a street of bungalows in Darras Hall have been recommended for refusal by borough planning officers.

Applicant Mr R Richardson applied for permission to build the three bedroom detached home on the land to the west of 5 Crossfell.

The street comprises of 28 shallow pitched roofed dwellings, and the borough council has received five objections from neighbours.

A report to the April meeting of the development services committee said the design of the proposed property, with a second storey and dormer windows to the front elevation, was 'considered to be out of keeping with the character of Crossfell'.

It added that the first floor element 'would set an undesired precedent in Crossfell which would reduce the ability of the local planning authority to resist future first floor development elsewhere in the street, leading to a wider alteration of the character of the street'.

Youth groups benefit from club's fundraising

By Andy Anderson, Ponteland 41 Club

Three local youth organisations were among the recipients of generous donations from Ponteland 41 Club earlier this month.



Club chairman Peter Evans presented cheques for £100 each to 1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade, 1st Ponteland Scout Group, Castle Ward Division of the Girl Guides and Ponteland Stroke Club to assist in their projects and events.

The money was raised at the annual Wheelbarrow Race organised by Jonathan Goodwill, and presented at the club's AGM at the Highlander Inn, Belsay.

Pictured are (l to r) Peter Harding (Scouts), Marie Brydone (Stroke Club), Peter Evans (41 Club), Janet Griffiths (Girl Guides) and Leslie Dodd & Maureen Hodson (Boys' Brigade).

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Ponteland regeneration survey the results

By Syd Cowan
Vice Chairman, Ponteland Community Partnership

492 questionnaires were returned to our Senior Projects Officer at Castle Morpeth Council.

This is a good return and, we are told, one of the most successful that the Borough Council has seen to date.

We would personally like to thank everyone who took the time to participate either in the survey or attended the consultation meeting on December 11, whether to speak or to express an interest in Ponteland village regeneration.

We hoped for a good return for the survey, with as broad a representation as possible, and this is exactly what we got. The age range varied from 13 – 90 years old and we got a good mix of male and female participants.

So without further ado, here are the results of the survey:

Did you attend the 11th December consultation meeting?

Yes 32% No 68%

Do you use the Merton Way shopping centre?

Yes 95% No 5%

Are you happy with the existing shopping centre appearance?

Yes 4% No 96%

Are you happy with the supermarket provision in Ponteland?

Yes 78% No 22%

What would you like to see in a revitalised village centre?

Community facility	58%
Library	88%
Upgraded buildings	84%
Improved green spaces	67%
High quality supermarket	20%
New retail businesses	38%
Retention of existing offer	63%
Visitor accommodation	10%
Open spaces	48%
Filling station	39%
Small business/office units	18%
Restaurants	33%
Car parking facilities	83%
Affordable housing	20%

The regeneration sub-group, at their inaugural meeting, considered these results and there are a few elements of the survey of which were found surprising:

- 351 residents attended the consultation meeting on December 11

at the Memorial Hall but only 32% of these people completed the questionnaire.

- Almost one in four of the returned questionnaires said that a centre for the youth of the village was vital (although this was not highlighted as an option).

The comments made by residents are hugely varied, with many constructive suggestions coming forward.

What we need to do now is to analyse the findings and move onto the next stage of developing a design brief for potential developers. This design brief will be formatted by the sub-group to ensure that it is a community-led brief with input from local residents and business representatives.

All questionnaires will be made available for public viewing at Ponteland Library in April. In the interest of confidentiality, all personal data has been removed.

If you have any comments or queries with regards to the results please do not hesitate to get in contact with the regeneration sub-group via letter to: c/o The Vergers Cottage, Main Street, Ponteland.





The way forward

The partnership is very happy with the number of completed surveys and the age range of the participants and we now feel confident to move forward to the next stage of the process.

The Partnership's regeneration sub-group has been tasked with looking at the results and comments and formatting a 'Design Brief' for potential developers.

What has come across loud and clear is that both the community and the businesses want to see some movement as soon as possible. Therefore we are hoping to have a draft document together by the end of June 2007.

It is important to stress that only the results of the survey and the comments of which the residents have made will be included in this document.

What we hope to achieve is a document formatted 'for the community by the community'.

If you feel that you could help in any way with this document, I am sure that the regeneration sub-group would be pleased to hear from you.

Public Notice

Ponteland Community Partnership will be holding its Annual General Meeting at The Memorial Hall, Darras Road, on Wednesday 30th May 2007 at 7pm.

If you are interested in becoming a member or applying to join the Executive Council please call Joanne Luther, Senior Projects Officer, on 01670 794763.

Ponteland Community Partnership AGM

Ponteland Community Partnership will be holding its Annual General Meeting on **Wednesday May 30 at The Memorial Hall, Darras Road at 7pm**. All residents are welcome to come and hear about what the partnership have achieved to date.

It is an exciting time for us as our membership has grown quite considerably since Christmas and substantial movement has been made by our sub-groups which will be presented at the meeting.

Election of the Honorary Officers and Executive Council will take place at the meeting.

More information for people interested in standing for election is available from Joanne Luther, Senior Projects Officer, on (01670) 794763.

RAYMOND SPROUL RETIRED CONSULTING ENGINEER

Resident for 38 years



I would like to introduce myself as the Chairman of the Ponteland Community Partnership regeneration sub-group. I have over 30 years project

management experience of multi-million pound ventures and I am hoping to use my skills, knowledge and passion for the area to help to produce a development that would be both suitable for the community who will use it and architecturally designed to complement the village in which it is situated.

Your letters...



Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views. The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters published, for legal or other reasons.

Ponteland past, present and future once again dominate the thoughts of correspondents.

Why not settle for what we already have?

I had the good fortune (as a member of the Local History Society) to be present when a talk was given by Mrs Dorothy Warner on 'memories of old Ponteland'.

Mrs Warner – because she has lived in Ponteland all her life – gave a very comprehensive, illustrated talk on Ponteland as it was, and as it is now.

It was a great pity that all Ponteland residents could not be present to see the way the village has altered through the eyes of someone who has lived through the changes.

It seems to me that we should all sit back and appreciate what we have already, and not be badgered into Option 4 by the powers that be. Regeneration does not always mean improvement. What it does mean is that someone, somewhere will make a profit, then move on to another location.

For goodness sake, Ponteland is not a Cramlington, nor a Killingworth – it is a lovely village approximately seven miles from the city, and yet seems worlds away because of its tranquillity.

We are conveniently situated for both coast and country, the village itself (apart from the obvious architectural abominations) is quaint, with lovely old pubs (well done The Diamond), lots of restaurants and local traders who serve us well. Of course, the icing on the cake is the Pele Tower.

On top of all this, we also have excellent schools. All these things go together to make NE20 a very desirable postcode in which to live.

I think we should all reflect on these points, when making up our minds on the proposed Option 4, because it is a well known saying that 'no one misses the water until the well runs dry'. So please let us ensure that we keep the water in our well.

I somehow think that given a simple yes/no vote, our

elected officials would be left in no doubt that the majority do not want Option 4.

We are supposed to live in a democracy, so let us at least be democratic in our deliberations.

A Ponteland resident

Older generation should dominate regeneration debate

I was heartened to read Bill Goldsworthy's letter in the March issue of Pont News & Views – I think he has hit the nail right on the head.

Re the supermarket issue, aside of the fact that we, the residents, don't want another one – would one come? I think any supermarket chain would look at the situation and decide that if there is not currently overcapacity, we are very near that position.

Re the library, retention of it in the centre of the village is essential. Why not site it in the old Co-op building, which has remained empty since the demise of the gym. Of course there is the present site, though the more cynical of us may suspect that that site is earmarked as part of the package to be offered to prospective builders.

In the March issue of Access, the magazine for young people across Castle Morpeth, there is an article by Cal Sherlock titled 'Don't let the older generation dominate this debate'.

I have no quibble with this title – everyone is entitled to their say, but it is a fact that Ponteland is an ageing community, and inevitably the older generation will dominate. He is rather naïve, I feel, in being duped into pushing the Borough Council's biased survey.

Regarding the Bell Villas supermarket site, I can't understand what all the fuss is about – it has been a commercial site since at least the early fifties, when Jamieson's garage moved there from its original site next to the first school on North Road, where a bungalow now stands.

Surely the new building is no worse than some that have graced the site since then.

Geoff Brown

Views of younger generation should be major factor in regeneration

It was heartening to read that members of the sixth form would like their wishes to be considered should any regenerating of Ponteland take place.

Of course the aspirations of the younger generation should be a major factor in any plans for the future. After all, they are the future, and will have to live with the end product, so naturally they will not be happy unless their ideas have been considered.

Every section of the community will have their own preferences to suit their own needs. Full consultation should take place with all age groups putting forward their own points of view, so that hopefully we will finish up with something for everyone, which is the only way to keep something rather special 'Ponteland'.

The proposed alterations should not be looked upon as a war between 'them and us'. So please let us have sensible and productive debate on the subject.

'Worried Ponteland resident'

Bell Villas: two wrongs don't make a right

Few people would disagree with your correspondent Janet Halsall (March issue) with regards her assessment of the architectural merits of Ponteland Police Station. I don't think it has won too many design prizes.

But, as my dear mother used to say as she whacked me across the backside with the copper stick, "two wrangs dernt mek a reet."

John Hague
High View

MAY DEADLINE

The May magazine will be delivered the week beginning May 14. Deadline for all copy/adverts is **Friday April 27**.



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WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY FOR A BETTER FUTURE

How to cook healthy food on a budget

Ponteland launch for roadshows showcasing local market produce



Mark Earnden demonstrates his culinary skills at a previous Expo Chef roadshow

A celebrity chef who has worked around the world is to launch a series of roadshows showcasing local market produce in Ponteland later this month.

Mark Earnden, owner of Platinum Chefs, uses fresh ingredients on a budget to create healthy balanced meals in a fun and exciting way.

His services have been secured by Castle Morpeth Local Strategic Partnership, with ten Expo Chef roadshows being held this year across the borough.

The first is at this month's Ponteland Farmers' Market, at the Memorial Hall from 9am on Saturday April 28.

The aim of the pilot project is two-fold: to promote a healthier lifestyle to people who face multiple barriers to

inclusion from deprived communities and to attract both traders and customers to Castle Morpeth's three markets.

Mark said: "With such a huge emphasis on healthy eating these days, Expo Chef now helps carry the message that nutritious food is vital for people to lead a positive and fulfilling lifestyle.

"At the roadshows I emphasise that food is fun for everyone and that food can be affordable when you know what to cook and how to cook it. I encourage individuals to interact with the show, including food tasting, spice testing, games and prizes etc."

"Throughout the show I am constantly cooking dishes made from fresh produce. It is important to get the message across that the affordable

food is generally the most nutritious, i.e. fresh fruit and vegetables.

"My aim is to show the community simple, interesting and nutritious food dishes which can be cooked at home. I want to inspire confidence to the community that anyone can cook.

"I will prove there are simple methods and easy ways of cooking. I make cooking fun and interesting for the community, and so far the events have been overwhelmingly positive."

Expo Chef roadshow programme

April 28 Ponteland Farmers Market
May 6 Morpeth Farmers Market
May 30 Wednesday Market
Aug 29 Wednesday Market
Sept 2 Morpeth Farmers Market
Sept 29 Ponteland Farmers Market

* More autumn dates to be announced



Friends of Ponteland Park AGM

By Coral Wilmott
Secretary, Friends of Ponteland Park

The second AGM of the Friends of Ponteland Park was held on March 20th at 7pm in Merton Hall. Despite appalling weather, 24 members turned out.

The chairperson reported on the FOPP achievements throughout the past year, which included the general care of various areas in the park, snowdrop relocation and the planting of over 10,450 bulbs with help of local schoolchildren.

Others included the start of planting a Spring meadow and the final major project for the year - the planting of 100 trees for the 'Young Peoples' Wood by the young people themselves.

Suggestions and comments from the floor were helpful and the whole evening was rounded off with a splendid film show by Mrs Muriel Sobo.



Dancercise

at Ponteland First School

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Pont's under-13s win county rugby cup

By Peter Charleton

Ponteland under-13s Rugby Team were victorious against Berwick under-13s, in the final of the Northumberland County Plate held at Morpeth Rugby Club.

Ponteland were excellent in the first half, but suffered in the second half largely due to the strong vocal support from the many supporters Berwick brought with them. Despite being so close, there were hardly any Ponteland supporters.

Two minutes from the end Berwick scored a try, but failed to convert. As a result Ponteland won by 27 points to 26!

They were formally presented with the trophy and their medals in the interval at the match between the Falcons and Northampton Saints on Sunday April 8.

PONTELAND MEDICAL GROUP

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Burglars target Darras



Motorists warned after serious crashes

By PC Jon Gray,
Community Beat Officer, Ponteland

Since the last publication, we've had three house burglaries reported, all on Darras Hall and all taking place at various times.

In one instance, items were taken from an unlocked garage. The other two occurred during the late nights and early mornings, where the thief or thieves used ladders to climb in through the upper storey windows.

A man was arrested during the latter part of March, and was subsequently charged with a burglary offence to a house on Darras Hall.

There has been no great upsurge, or developing patterns concerning other criminal offences, apart from thefts from builders' vehicles. The message is not being picked up - that is look after your kit, or it will go.

There are people coming onto the estate, who look like builders themselves, and are helping themselves to power tools etc., which have been left on the back of a pick-up truck, or at the roadside.

I know that it slows things down, but please secure your valuable tools all the time when you're not using them. Some useful intelligence has been gained recently concerning some of the people involved in these type of offences.

This time of year will see an increase in road traffic, particularly at the weekends. You will all notice the increase in cyclists and motorcyclists, as the weather becomes more spring-like.

There have been two serious category collisions very recently in Northumberland, which are currently under investigation. As has been said in previous columns, please drive (or cycle) safely allowing a "margin of error", as mistakes will happen.

Don't speed - adjust your speed, taking in account road conditions, volume of traffic etc. Drive defensively. I know people get annoyed when they come across reckless drivers - be aware that they are about, and you will reduce your chances of being hit by them.

They are stopped, booked, ticketed and sometimes detained - hence the continuing "carping on" about camera vans etc., which you read in some papers.

We all will make mistakes on the road but, by driving defensively, the consequences of the mistake can be lessened.

On a similar line, recent TV reports were broadcast about the effect of the new legislation covering the use of mobile phones whilst driving. The guidelines from above are that, although discretion is always there, people committing this offence should be booked, and would get points.

Finally, as many readers will know, the enquiry office at Bell Villas will close shortly. On April 13, enquiry clerk Hazel Helm will move to a new post at Morpeth. I know that many residents will join her colleagues here in wishing her all the best for the future, and in thanking her for all the work that she has done here in Ponteland. The office will remain open as a patrol base.



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