

# pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Pharmacy prescribes free home delivery service

Head's warning over school budget cuts

Volunteers recognised in Mayor's annual awards

## Chefs head Big Cookathon





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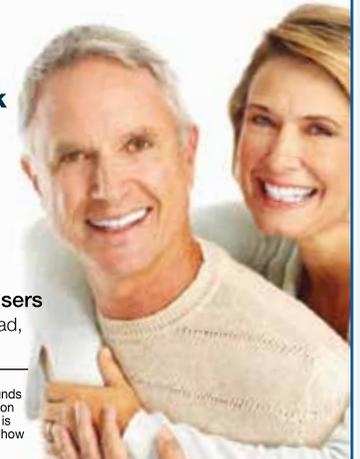


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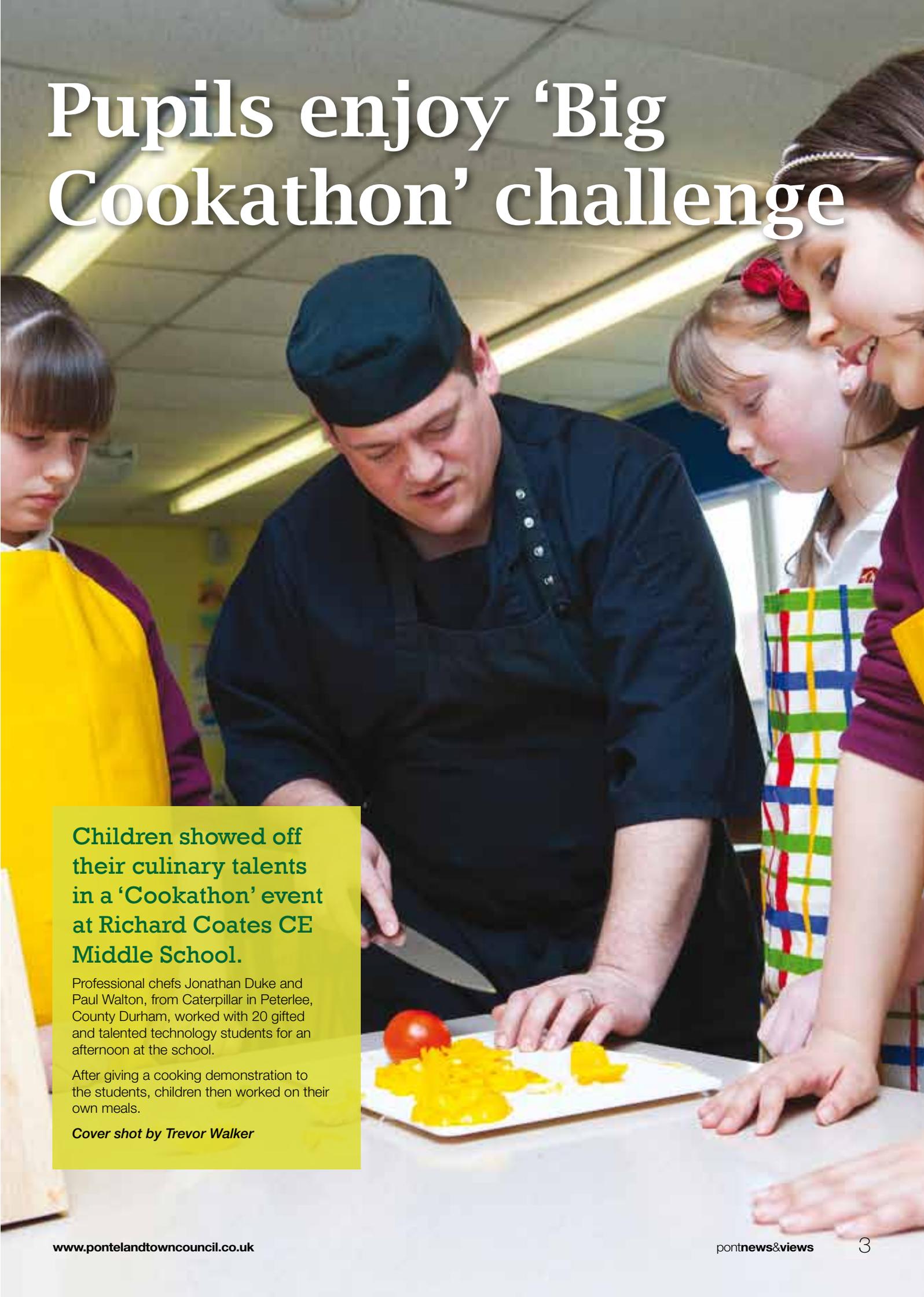
*Its been a family thing since 1936... so we know we've got it right!*



Pont News and Views is published by Ponteland Town Council in conjunction with Ponteland Community Partnership. If you would like to submit an article, feature or advertise in the magazine, contact: **Tel:** (0191) 3408422 **Mob:** 07954 157939 **Email:** [pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk](mailto:pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk)  
**Write:** Cian creative pr, 5 East Boldon Road, Cleadon Village, SR6 7SH

Produced by Cian creative pr

# Pupils enjoy 'Big Cookathon' challenge



**Children showed off their culinary talents in a 'Cookathon' event at Richard Coates CE Middle School.**

Professional chefs Jonathan Duke and Paul Walton, from Caterpillar in Peterlee, County Durham, worked with 20 gifted and talented technology students for an afternoon at the school.

After giving a cooking demonstration to the students, children then worked on their own meals.

*Cover shot by Trevor Walker*

# The IT Crowd!

## School gets high tech accolade



**Children at Richard Coates CE Middle School are at the forefront of using information and communications technology to enhance their work, and that's official!**

Following an extensive external assessment the Ponteland school has been awarded the prestigious ICT Mark.

The award recognises the school's success in developing the strategic use of

ICT in both administration and across the curriculum. Parents will have proof that their children are attending a school at the forefront of modern technology.

ICT Subject Leader Katie King said: "We are delighted to be awarded the ICT Mark, which recognises our positive approach to ICT and the benefits it is bringing to our children. We believe that ICT can be used in every aspect of learning and that it is essential our children are equipped for the modern world."

The assessor for the award said: "Richard Coates thoroughly deserve the accolade of an ICT mark accreditation. They clearly demonstrate how important it is to take a holistic approach to using ICT in schools. Their investment in new technology has contributed to substantial improvements in learning."

*Photo by Trevor Walker*

# Dobsons

Residential Sales and Lettings



We are delighted to have been invited to join Home Sale Network, the national Network of independent estate agents, following selection as the Network's local representative for Ponteland. Home Sale Network is highly selective in its invitation - only membership, basing its criteria on quality of service, local knowledge and professionalism amongst others. Each member is handpicked after thorough checks including mystery shopping, which has identified us as being the most appropriate Home Sale Network member in this area.

Being a member of the Network provides us, and our customers with a host of benefits not previously available to us. Through networking with other members, we can also offer expanded services for both buyers and sellers in Ponteland.



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## PROGRAMME OF WORKS REPORT

### Slope Protection Works

The replacement trees have been planted and the project is now complete.

### CCTV

The installation is virtually complete.

### Fencing at Twizell Place Play Area

This project is complete.

### Hedge cutting – Park

The works have been carried out.

### Park footpaths

This project has been completed.

## GRANT APPLICATIONS

### Darras Hall Estate Committee

The usual contribution of £600 towards upkeep of the bridle path was agreed.

### Great North Air Ambulance

A grant of £100 towards the work of this organisation was approved.

### Ponteland Community High School – Youth Services

The Town Council approved a grant of £6,000 this year in order to provide sufficient funds for two detached youth work sessions per week and one centre based youth work session. The County Council still holds funds from last year that had not been utilised, therefore this sum would also go towards these sessions.

The Town Council expects a full report on the success of these sessions at the end of the year.

### Community Action Northumberland

The Town Council approved a grant of £75 towards the work of this organisation.

## COMMUNITY FORUM

The Council has been informed by the County Council that there would be no funding available for the Forums in this financial year. The views of the Ponteland Community Partnership are to be sought on the best way forward.

## REGENERATION

It is hoped that the County Council will be appointing the preferred developer within the next couple of months. Further public consultation on this will be carried out after this appointment.

## TRAINING POLICY

The Council approved a Training Policy last year and reported on the training which had taken place since.

## ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on March 21 and discussed various issues including possible improvements to the large planter in Merton Way. It was agreed to put down additional bark and membrane.

## NORTHUMBRIA IN BLOOM WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on March 21 and discussed proposals for the competition in 2011. A further meeting is to be held to discuss the outcome of the spring judging held on April 13.

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

### Dog Control Orders

As a result of extensive consultation, four new orders are being proposed by the County Council. The orders related to dogs being kept on leads next to highways and in all play areas, the removal of dog faeces and two seasonal orders relating to beaches in Newbiggin and Blyth.

### Other news

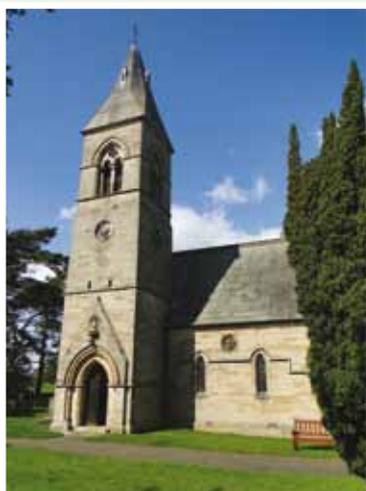
The following issues were reported by the County Councillors present at the meeting.

- The textiles bank at the household waste recovery centre was to be removed.
- The fees and charges in respect of cemeteries were to be increased by 50% across all county operated facilities.
- The Dial a Ride scheme in Ponteland had secured funding for the remainder of this calendar year.
- Funding had been secured from the Members Small Scheme budget for the restoration of the pond next to Ponteland Fire Station. This would fund a barrier, new paths and fencing.

## MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor reported that he had attended the Diamond Wedding celebrations in respect of Archie and Margaret Cave. He also reported on his attendance at a play at the High School entitled 'Leave the Knives Alone'. Councillors were reminded that the Mayor's Civic Service would be held on Sunday May 22.

*This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on April 13.*



## GREAT VENUE FOR A WEDDING – OR JUST SOMEWHERE TO RELAX

Holy Saviour Church, in the middle of the fields in Milbourne, is now registered for weddings - giving you a choice of two beautiful Anglican churches in Ponteland. Although small, it seats about 50 people - 70 at a squash - and would be a lovely setting for your special day. More details from the Church Office on (01661) 824470. Holy Saviour will be open every weekend and bank holidays through the summer. A place of beauty in our busy world. You are welcome to explore, or just sit and enjoy the peace. The church is situated on the road between Milbourne itself and the Hall - look for the spire across the fields.

## BRIDGE CLUBS

We have three Bridge Clubs in Ponteland - Ponteland Tuesday Bridge Club which meets on Tuesday in the Memorial Hall at 7pm, Ponteland Contract Bridge which meets on Wednesdays in the Memorial Hall at 7.15pm, and Ponteland Village Bridge Club which meets on Fridays in Merton Hall at 7pm. All of the clubs are unaffiliated, needing members, very friendly and welcome all levels.



# Win larger than life prizes.

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# Bench marks tribute to Dick

By Stewart Blair

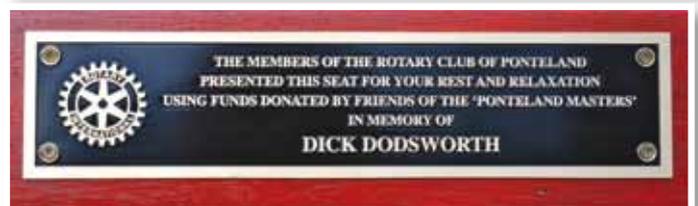
Four highly respected Ponteland businessmen - the late Dick Dodsworth and Paul Syron, Bob Frame, now in his late 90s, and the evergreen Brian Parker - agreed some 31 years ago to entertain a number of customers, colleagues and friends to an afternoon's golf followed by dinner at Ponteland Golf Club.

The Ponteland Masters was born. This wonderful tradition has continued thanks to the sterling efforts of Brian, now ably assisted by Graham Minett

and Graham Wilson.

Last summer a raffle was held in memory of Dick and the proceeds donated to the Rotary Club of Ponteland of which he was for many years a very active and productive member, including two terms as President.

He was a keen walker, gardener and countryman so it was mutually agreed that a fitting tribute would be to place a park bench at the junction of Rotary Way and the bridle path, a feature many local residents would find afforded a welcome few minutes' respite from their exercise. As can be seen from the photograph, it does, indeed, look perfect.



## Have you walked through the park recently?

By Muriel Sobo

There is the most magnificent display of daffodils, those harbingers of spring, to be seen.

A most welcome sight after a long, dreary winter, Thousands of bulbs were planted last October by schoolchildren, volunteers, Friends of Ponteland Park and the MP and the Mayor also joined in.

This was done in response to an approach from the Marie Curie organisation and is a splendid feature of the bank near the bridge from the Memorial Hall car park. No wonder Wordsworth expressed his joy by writing a poem. Can you quote it?



### Ponteland Golf Club

"One of Northumberland's finest!  
Excellent catering & bar facilities."  
Golf North East, 2008

Both playing & social memberships are currently being offered at Ponteland Golf Club. Membership categories start from the age of 10 and there is a range of payment options currently available for both ladies and gentlemen. There is currently no waiting list for ANY category. To discuss the available options and fees, or for further general information, please contact:

Secretary Greg Waugh at:  
[secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk)  
Tel: 01661 822689



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Jan is pictured with Heather Hunt of Ponteland Medical Group at the new exhibition. Photo by Trevor Walker

# Surgery hosts exhibition to raise funds for Kenyan appeal

**Patients visiting Ponteland Medical Group can pass the time as their wait for their appointment enjoying an exhibition of historical photographs.**

The display by local photographic artist Jan Radwanski has been laid on as part of a campaign to raise funds to send a renovated Land Rover Defender to Mbita Village in Western Kenya.

Staff at Ponteland Medical Group want to provide villagers in the East African country with a community vehicle and ambulance for much needed relief work there.

The vehicle, supplied by Newcastle Airport, will be donated to local charity Viagenco, which helps manage small scale foreign aid projects in support of local schools, health centres, farms and children in need.

Jan, of Sycamore Avenue, Darras Hall, has agreed to contribute 25 per cent of any sales of photos at the exhibition to the appeal fund. Anyone wanting to purchase any of the prints, a selection of old local photos which have been professionally restored at Jan's studio, can do so by contacting him direct – they are not for sale at the surgery.

To find out more about the appeal or make a donation, visit the appeal page at <http://www.justgiving.com/ambulanceforafrica> or the Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=122368197811338>

To find out more about the exhibition see Jan's website at [www.jan-radwanski.co.uk](http://www.jan-radwanski.co.uk)

## Play tennis for FREE!

A free introduction to tennis for children and adults at Ponteland Tennis Club, Memorial Hall, Darras Road

**Date:** Sunday 8 May 2011

**Times:** Hour-long sessions for different age groups from 10am to 2pm

**Wear:** t-shirt, shorts or joggers, trainers without studs

**Bring:** a sports bottle of water

All equipment will be provided and sessions will be run by LTA licensed coaches

For further information and availability of places on each of the sessions contact Sue Harrison by emailing [sue.harrison@mail.com](mailto:sue.harrison@mail.com)



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# Your letters

The Editor  
Pont News & Views



Ideas on tackling the perennial issues of dog dirt and road safety in this month's letters...

## Wouldn't dog waste bins be cheaper than patrol officers?

On my walk with the dogs down North Road, along Darras Road to Moor Lane then to the shops, I counted 16 deposits of dog dirt, 11 of which were on Darras Road, some in bags and others left on the spot.

On my way home along Runnymede Road, Fox Covert Lane, through Ladywell Estate and onto Thornhill Road there were not quite as many, only eight.

One of my dogs did an evacuation at the beginning of Darras Road so I had to carry my new 'designer handbag' all the way to Martins newsagent which didn't really go with my outfit!

It would have been much nicer to have been able to dispose of it in a dog waste bin and I dare say a lot of other people think the same way.

Why do dog owners have to carry dog faeces for miles before they find a bin to put it in? We do not seem to have many dog waste bins on view – are they hidden in places only dog walkers are supposed to go and not on main streets?

I am sure all dog walkers feel the same; if bins are provided they will be used. Is it cheaper to provide dog waste bins or pay for council officers to be on dog patrol?

**A Responsible Dog Owner**  
Ponteland

## Thank you for your kind donations

I am a resident of Ponteland, read your monthly magazine and I would be grateful if you could add a BIG thank you to all whom shop in Waitrose who have kindly donated their tokens to the charity box for the Freeman Heart & Lung Transplant Association - it is so much appreciated.

As well as being local I received a heart transplant in 2006 at the Freeman Hospital and unfortunately so did my brother some two years ago.

I have recently become a Committee member who is involved in raising funds to continually purchase medical equipment for the transplant wards and outpatients.

As yet I don't know the full sum of donations we are receiving, but it is very overwhelming the amount of people who have chosen our charity and if you could put a small article in your magazine I would be so happy.

**Claire Crozier**  
Ladywell Way  
Ponteland

## Cul-de-sac speed restrictions will make it safer for children

There are a number of young children in the cul-de-sac where I live and these days parents like to keep their youngsters in sight.

I have watched children playing in the front street and scattering when a car approaches, as they should – the road is for cars, but surely, as a cul-de-sac is a dead end with no through road, would it not make sense to reduce the speed limit in some of these cul-de-sacs?

Not all drivers are sympathetic with this practice but a little patience would not come amiss!

**Concerned householder**  
Dunsgreen  
Ponteland

## 'Blackpool Illuminations' not welcome in Ponteland

So Blackpool Illuminations have arrived in Ponteland.

I think the fairy lights on the trees outside the New Rendezvous Restaurant are completely out of character with this lovely old building. I do hope they are not going to be permanent.

**Kate Ross**  
Eland Edge  
Ponteland

## CARROLL ARSON ARREST

A man has been arrested in connection with an arson attack on a car owned by England footballer Andy Carroll in Ponteland.

The former Newcastle United striker's new Range Rover was set alight in October outside the Darras Hall home of club captain Kevin Nolan.

Mr Carroll was staying at the Newcastle captain's home as a condition of his bail after being charged with assaulting his former girlfriend Laurie Henderson. The charge was later dropped.

A Northumbria Police spokesman said: "On Tuesday, police arrested a 33-year-old man from the Whitley Bay area in connection with an arson that happened in Darras Road, Ponteland, on October 20, 2010." He has been bailed until August.

## SAINSBURY'S PONTELAND RAISES OVER £800 FOR COMIC RELIEF

Staff and customers at Sainsbury's Ponteland amassed £844 for Comic Relief with a variety of fundraising activities.

The sum was raised towards the firm's record breaking national donation of over £10m by holding a cake stall, a sponsored silence and by placing manager Jason Harmer in the stocks. Jason said: "I really enjoyed putting the event together and it turned out to be such a great hit, with lots of people generously donating money."

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.

**June issue deadlines:** The May issue will be delivered on June 2 and 3. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday May 16. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the June issue.

# What's on...

## Northumberland Fuchsia Society

Our next meeting is on Thursday May 5 from 7.30pm at St. Matthew's RC Church Hall, Ponteland.

## Ponteland's weekly market

Ponteland's weekly market at Merton Way shopping centre is on between 9am and 4pm on Friday May 6, 13, 20 and 27.

## Ponteland History Society Help Desk

Are you doing a school project, researching family history, needing historical information on a date, building or person in the Ponteland area, or looking for an old local photograph? Then perhaps we can help. Our free help desk is open at Ponteland Library from 2.15pm to 5pm on Friday May 6, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see [www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html](http://www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html)

## Ponteland Bowling Club open mornings

Ponteland Bowling Club (Darras Road next to Memorial Hall) will be holding weekly 'Open Mornings' on Saturday May 7, 14, 21 and 28. The sessions, from 10.30am to 12noon, are free and are open to anyone to come along and give the game of bowls a try. No previous experience is required.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club AGM

The AGM is being held at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm on Sunday May 8. Speaker Prof John Derry will talk on the subject of 'Hadrian'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm. Membership is

open to gentlemen aged over 55 who are not in full time employment. The annual subscription is £10. For further details contact Donald Lloyd at [donaldlloyd@sky.com](mailto:donaldlloyd@sky.com) or on (01661) 872661.

## North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

For our last meeting of the season on Monday May 9 we have two of our own speakers talking about their favourite alpine plants. George Young, an experienced exhibitor and judge will be talking about how he grows American alpines, centring mainly on Trilliums both grand and petite which are wonderful woodland plants to grow. He will also talk about the beautiful American viola which is a difficult but beautiful plant. Alan Furness, with 23 Farrer medals under his belt and a senior judge, will be talking of his success with Dianthus, a beautiful carpet of colour when you have the know-how. Both these talks will have a practical aspect to them. Also at the meeting members will be bringing their interesting plants to show to the group. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road. The doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at [t.teal@btinternet.com](mailto:t.teal@btinternet.com) or (0191) 4132574.

## Stamfordham Village Fete

St Mary's Church, Stamfordham, is holding a fete on the village green from 1pm on Saturday May 14. Attractions include a balloon release, stalls and an art exhibition in the village hall.

## Stamfordham art exhibition

The Stamfordham Art Group Annual Exhibition and Sale of Paintings is

being held at the village hall from 5.30pm to 8pm on Friday May 13, and 10.30am to 5pm on Saturday May 14 and Sunday May 15.

## The Vicar's Railway Films

Saturday May 14, 3pm and 7.30pm - The Vicar's Railway Films in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road. "Metroland" with John Betjeman, and other London films. Free admission, doughnuts in the interval.

## Ponteland Floral Art Club

The next meeting is Tuesday May 17 starting at the usual time of 7.30pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road. New members are welcome to attend or contact Linda Bolam on (01661) 822504 for more information.

## Plant sale and coffee morning

Saturday May 21 at 10.30am - Plant Sale and Coffee Morning in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road. Lots of plants for sale, plus tea and coffee - in aid of the Summer Festival.

## Quiz night at St Mary's

Saturday May 21 at 7pm - Quiz Night in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road. Come as a team of five, or be prepared to join a team - in aid of the Summer Festival. £3 a person, refreshments available, raffle.

## Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild's next meeting is Monday May 23 at St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland at 2pm. We have Pat Ashton-Smith who is giving an illustrated talk called Love Letters from the Front. She has lots of examples of the embroidered postcards from World War I. Visitors welcome. A small charge is made to defray hall charges. Coffee or tea available after the talk. Additional information available from Sheila Armstrong on (0191) 2667873.

## Ponteland Golf Club Gentlemen's Open: May 24

Entries are still open for this gentlemen's four-ball team charity event. Best three stableford scores count at each hole. Handicap allowance will be ¾ club handicap. Ties will be decided according to the practice of Ponteland Golf Club. Entry fee is £70 for a team of four and all proceeds from the day will be donated to Rotary charities. Prize money for the winning team is £200, with £150 for the runners-up and £120 for third place. There will also be prizes for 'nearest the pin', the 'straightest drive' and putting. Entries enclosing entry fees, a stamped addressed envelope, contact telephone number or email address, the names of team players and their handicaps and a preferred starting time band should be sent by Monday May 16 to Stewart Blair, 45 Cheviot View, Ponteland, NE20 9BH. For more information email [stewart.blair1@virgin.net](mailto:stewart.blair1@virgin.net) or call (01661) 822367.

## Party in the Park: June 12

The popular annual event is being held on Sunday June 12 from 1.30pm in Ponteland Park. More in next month's issue.

## Kirkheaton Show: June 18

It is the 62nd Kirkheaton Show on June 18. A local agricultural/country show. A fun day out for all of the family with horse and pony classes, dog, terrier and hound classes, children's races, industrial tent with children's section, homemade tea's, bar, cumberland wrestling, terrier racing and trade stands. All enquiries can be made to Diane Todd, Show Secretary, at [kirkheatonshow@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kirkheatonshow@hotmail.co.uk) or on 07730 431627. Show schedules will be available from early May. Following the show profits are shared between local charities and groups, so please come and support us on the day.

## Yoga Class

Ponteland Memorial Hall  
Monday mornings 10am - 11am

Come and give it a try! **£4.50**

For more info call Felicity on  
**01661 854984** or **07856 550 559**  
or email [felicitypullen@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:felicitypullen@tiscali.co.uk)  
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Where	MAY Dates	Time
PONTELAND MEMORIAL HALL	MONDAY 9 <sup>th</sup> 16 <sup>th</sup> 23 <sup>rd</sup>	8.00pm to 9.00pm
	WEDNESDAY 4 <sup>th</sup> 11 <sup>th</sup> 25 <sup>th</sup>	6.45pm to 7.45pm
	THURSDAY 19 <sup>th</sup>	6.45pm to 7.45pm

Contact: **DANNY** on **07921 910 113** for details      Price to Party: **£4.00**      Lets dance ©

# Dedicated volunteers recognised with Mayor's awards

Two dedicated volunteers who have devoted time to community and charitable ventures have had their efforts recognised with awards from the Mayor of Ponteland.

Margaret Stainsby is this year's recipient of the Town Council's Meritorious Service Award for her work as Chairman of the Friends of Ponteland Park group, which has helped achieve major improvements to the park.

Ponteland Community High School student Philippa Aspinall was presented with a cheque for £100 by Coun Robin Ramsay as part of the Mayor's 'Second Mile Award'.

Sixth former Philippa, from Heddon-on-the-Wall, has been a charity fundraiser for several years and was nominated for the award by the school. She is to use the cash to help fund a trip to London to further her academic interest in art and design.

*Photos by Trevor Walker*



**I'M HERE TO HELP...**  
**GUY OPPERMAN MP**

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# Don't leave your car unlocked or your mobile phone lying around

By PC Paul Henery, Ponteland Community Beat Manager

There have been a total of nine crimes reported in the Ponteland area in the period from March 15 to April 19.

They break down as follows:

- three thefts
- two theft from motor vehicles
- one theft of motor vehicle
- one burglary (dwelling)
- one criminal damage
- one making off without payment.

Enquiries are ongoing for all these offences which may lead to arrests.

I would like to remind everyone that a lot of these crimes could be easily prevented with a few simple measures. There have been a number of offences recently where people have left their car doors unlocked and property in their vehicle while parked outside their house. Even if a car is parked on a

gated drive it should still be locked.

My other piece of advice would be to make sure you secure your mobile phone and do not leave it lying around anywhere, even for a few minutes - it could prevent it from being stolen.

CSO Ruddick's next surgeries are on Saturday May 7 between 10am - 11am at Merton Hall, Ponteland, and Friday May 27 between 11am - 12noon at Ponteland Library.

The May Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) meeting will be held in Ponteland Children's Centre, Thornhill Road, at 9.30am on Tuesday May 17.



## LOCAL BAND HELP MOUNTAIN RESCUE

The Whistling Sheep, Ponteland based independent youth band, played for a fundraising evening at the Memorial Hall on March 26. A profit of £1,730 was made from the enthusiastic dancers for the National Park Mountain Rescue Team - the event was a sell out!



The band has been made up of young people from the Ponteland, Morpeth and Hexham schools over the last 15 years - have a look at [www.whistling sheep.co.uk](http://www.whistling sheep.co.uk) for more information.

## 2011 AGM

The 2011 Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership will be held on Wednesday May 18 at 7pm in Merton Hall, Ponteland.



Nominations for membership of the Executive Council, the posts of Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer (for three years) and for the annual posts of Chairman, and the Chairmen of the Regeneration, Transport, Environment, and Youth sub-Groups, should be submitted in writing not later than Wednesday May 4 2011, to:

Susi Goncu, Locality Development Officer, Local Services, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.

# New Rendezvous restaurant now at the former Smithy Bistro next to the Diamond Inn.



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# Ponteland family's garden centre has the best blooms in Britain

**A Ponteland family is celebrating success after their garden centre weeded out the competition in a national awards ceremony.**

Family firm Cowell's Garden Centre based in Woosington has been awarded the prestigious UK 'Garden Centre of the Year 2011 Award' by industry body the Garden Centre Association (GCA) as well as the Ruxley Rose Award for best plant area in the UK.

Alan Cowell, who lives in Ponteland, set up the firm over 30 years ago and Cowell's has also been named one of 13 Garden Centres of Excellence in the country by the GCA for the fifth year in a row.

In a war of the roses the centre battled some of the UK's biggest chain brands to win the titles. Director of Cowell's Garden Centre, Martin Cowell (Alan's son) said: "As an independent centre we are delighted to be able to compete and win at such a high level.

"We received a spot check by the GCA auditors in Spring 2010 and recorded one of the top scores in the country, which saw us awarded 'Best garden centre in the North East'. A further spot check on the centre and four others then resulted in Cowell's receiving the highest result overall. We are immensely proud of our achievements."



Gillie Westwood, chief executive of the GCA, said: "We are absolutely delighted for Cowell's - they won this award because their standards of retailing are consistently high. The attention to detail, especially in their exceptional plant area, is second to none. It's a fantastic achievement and a testimony to their hard work for which they should feel proud."

The garden centre competition is designed to reward industry excellence in the display, quality and customer service of plants in centres nationwide. The GCA completes an intensive annual audit of over 160 centres.

## SIGN UP FOR NORTHUMBERLAND NEWS

**Northumberland News, the county council produced resident magazine, is changing.**

The magazine has been sent to every home in the county since October 2009 but to help save money and the environment the authority will no longer be posting Northumberland News through every door.

Instead, from July you can get all the latest news about council services delivered direct to your email inbox.

Whether you're interested in schools, the environment, local events, culture, leisure, transport or the decisions that directly impact on your local area - you can access a host of information by signing up for the quarterly electronic version of Northumberland News.

Everyone who signs up will automatically be entered into a competition for some brilliant prizes including parking passes worth £100 and annual memberships for your local sports centre.

If you don't have access to email or the internet the authority is also producing a small number of traditional paper magazines which can be collected from your local library or council Information centre.

By making these changes Northumberland County Council hopes to embrace new technology, make efficiency savings and help the environment while still keeping residents informed.

If you would like to receive this new quarterly email please visit the following web link and enter your details:

[www.northumberland.gov.uk/extra](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/extra)

## Fiona Hall MEP

Lib Dem MEP for the North East

Please get in touch if there's anything I can help you with. Best wishes, Fiona.

**How to contact me:**  
By post: 55a Old Elvet, Durham, DH1 3HN  
By email: [fiona@fionahallmep.co.uk](mailto:fiona@fionahallmep.co.uk)  
By phone: 0191 383 0119

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# The Chinese Way

Ponteland Community High School is now officially one of the top schools in the country when it comes to teaching Mandarin and developing students' understanding of Chinese culture.

It is one of only 34 schools nationally to receive the Confucius Classroom award this year, in recognition of its status as a centre of excellence in the subject.

The award includes a £6,000 cash boost to help PCHS – the first state school to become a language college in 1995 – create a dedicated Confucius Classroom and develop a regional network of schools teaching Chinese and Chinese culture.

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust set up a Confucius Institute to work in partnership with the Office of Chinese



Aiden Sutherland, language college director at PCHS, is pictured receiving the award from Education Secretary Michael Gove and Jennifer Jupe, Strategic Director of Specialism and Curriculum Networks at the SSAT, in a ceremony at The Barbican in London.

Language Council International (Hanban) and Peking University. Mandarin Chinese is now second only to French in terms of UK employer demand for foreign language skills.

Language college director Aiden Sutherland said: "To be one of only 34 schools nationally to receive this award is a great achievement."

PCHS has a very successful partnership with Chengde Number 2 School in Hebei province, and each year a Chinese teacher from the partner school teaches Mandarin at Ponteland High and in its first schools.

The visiting teacher also leads a variety of Chinese cultural activities.

Several staff from Ponteland visit China for an annual summer school, a cultural and teaching visit that involves a two week teaching programme in a Chinese school organised through the British Council.

Students have the opportunity to visit to Beijing/Chengde as part of Ponteland's international visits programme. The next visit is in October, and includes excursions to the Great Wall of China, the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square.



*Matfen Hall*

## A GIRL'S NIGHT IN 'DIVA TRIBUTE' WITH NATALIE DEAN

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# 'Getabout Northumberland' to be extended to Ponteland

By David Cobb

Ponteland Community Partnership is assisting the WRVS to extend their successful 'Getabout Northumberland' car scheme to the Ponteland area.

The scheme is an organised form of lift giving whereby volunteer drivers use their own cars to provide door-to-door journeys for people who are unable to use either their own private transport or conventional public transport.

The scheme is designed to tackle social exclusion for residents who have no other means of travel. Many of the current users are from vulnerable groups who would otherwise be seriously isolated.

Examples of what the service can be used for include:

- Medical appointments – doctors, dentists, hospitals, opticians etc.
- Visiting family and friends.
- Shopping, hairdressing appointments.
- Attending meetings of community local groups, social outings.

The scheme can only operate successfully if there are sufficient volunteer drivers and enough service users to make the scheme viable.

New service users need to register with 'Getabout' and they are charged an annual subscription fee of £6 and then 45p per mile for each journey. Volunteer drivers are paid 40p per mile to cover fuel and other costs.

Journeys are measured from the volunteer driver's home to the destination and return. All invoicing is undertaken monthly by the WRVS.

Those interested in participating in the scheme either as a volunteer driver or service user should contact either:

Roz Tinlin, 'Getabout' Local Service Coordinator  
07834 753387 Roz.Tinlin@wrvs.org.uk

Carol Nevison, WRVS Service Delivery Manager  
(0191) 251 7834 Carol.Nevison@wrvs.org.uk

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# Pharmacy offers free prescription collection and delivery service

Collection of prescriptions and weekly delivery of drugs and medicines are among the new free services being offered by a Ponteland pharmacy.

In January Jessica Taylor took over the pharmacy on Brewery Lane which had been run by husband and wife team Peter and Pam Hopley for 15 years.

And having previously worked there as a Saturday girl when a student at Ponteland Community High School, Jessica is now putting her own stamp on the business with a number of new initiatives.

Her parents Diane and Neil are helping colleague Yvonne manage the new collection and delivery service for people who are patients at the Ponteland, Darras Hall or Scots Gap GP surgeries.

All patients have to do is inform the surgery their prescription is to be collected by Taylors Pharmacy, then call the pharmacy to request delivery.

Their drugs or medicines are then delivered free of charge to an area including Ponteland, Darras Hall, Medburn, Milbourne, Prestwick, Kirkley, Scots Gap, Cambo and Belsay.

Jessica's team can also arrange for the free delivery of weekly dosette trays containing only the required medication for the following week.

The pharmacy now stocks Frontline veterinary products for dogs and cats and another new service coming soon is the sale of agricultural supplies including antibiotics for cattle and horse wormers, with others sourced on demand.

Customers will also be able to enjoy a sit down and chat over a coffee, with the

recent introduction of a coffee machine and seating area.

Jessica, who previously worked at a pharmacy in Ashington and managed another in Darlington, said: "Running the pharmacy has been a dream of mine ever since I worked here as a Saturday girl aged 15.

"I aim to maintain the reputation Peter and Pam built of a friendly, independent pharmacy which maintains traditional values such as being responsive to patient needs and service with a smile, while introducing new initiatives like the free home delivery which will further improve the overall offer."

To find out more about the new services, call the pharmacy on (01661) 822055.



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# Ponteland head's fears over school cuts



**The headteacher of Ponteland Community High School has expressed fears over the impact of education cuts to its long term future.**

In a joint statement with three other county high school heads, Stephen Prandle (pictured) promised parents that their students come first, despite the major budget challenges they are facing over the coming year.

He pledged that delivering a quality curriculum that meets all students' needs, through teaching that is innovative and always striving for excellence, will remain at the top of the agenda.

But he warned: "We have avoided redundancies this year and last, due to careful management of our staffing needs. Our staff have responded maturely and constructively to the challenges imposed on us by budget issues which are beyond our control, and are determined to continue the reputation for excellence which our school and students enjoy.

"However, I do have worries about the long-term future of Northumberland's high schools. In 13-18 schools, which the

vast majority of Northumberland schools are, about 40 per cent of our income is attached to our sixth forms.

"The government has already said it plans to reduce funding for post-16 students, so high schools like ours will face even more challenging times over the next three years."

Haydon Bridge, Ponteland, Prudhoe and Hexham's Queen Elizabeth high schools are facing cuts and cost increases totalling hundreds of thousands of pounds in 2011-12, and the financial situation is not expected to improve any time soon.

## Have your say on youth services in open meeting

**An open meeting is being held next week to give members of the public the chance to help shape youth services in the Ponteland area.**

Experienced youth worker Ashley Brown is taking over the role of Senior Area Youth Worker for West Northumberland, as part of a recent restructure which sees Ponteland Youth Project merged into a new West Northumberland Youth Service.

Its purpose is to provide a quality service, offering young people the opportunity to learn new skills and experience new activities in a fun and safe environment.

Ashley said: "It is my aim to provide a wide range of activities that are fun, educational and develop the skills and aspirations of young people in this area. I welcome all thoughts from communities across the area and I can't wait to get started."

In Ponteland this will mean extending the times that Ponteland Youth project is open and offering detached youth work sessions to engage young people in positive activities. The programme is being developed with support from Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland High School and other agencies in the area.

If you would like to find out more or get involved by volunteering to help with, or run, activities then West Northumberland Youth Service and Ponteland Community High School are holding an open meeting to allow members of the local community to have their say about how they would like to see the service develop.

The meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Thursday May 12 in the school's dining hall. Refreshments will be provided.



## Jazz leads the parade

**By The Reverend Peter Barham, Vicar of Ponteland**

**On Palm Sunday members of St Mary's Church, Ponteland, started their service in the grounds of Richard Coates' School.**

Jazz the donkey was waiting, palm crosses were distributed, and a crowd of 90 people walked through the village to church.

On the first Palm Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, and so we were walking in his footsteps.

Like all those entering the City for the Passover Festival, we used the psalms - the hymns of praise from the bible - that he would have used: "I was glad when they said to me, Let us go to the House of the Lord."

Unlike Jesus and his disciples, we also sang: "We have a King who rides a donkey" to the tune of "Drunken Sailor"!

The sun shone, the birds sang, the crowds shouted "Hosanna", and Jazz behaved beautifully. A very special start to our Easter celebrations.

*Photo by Tony Hodson*

# Planning inspector to rule on controversial bar bistro plan for village centre

**A final decision on a controversial plan for a bar and bistro in Ponteland village centre will lie with a Government inspector after it was granted a licence - despite being refused planning permission.**

The proposal for the two-storey bar and restaurant on the site of the former Co-op store and Wine Rack off-licence in Bell Villas, which would be able to cater for up to 96 people, has generated several objections.

They include Ponteland Town Council, Civic Society and Methodist Church, Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service, and 15 neighbouring homeowners from the Ryehaugh Estate.

Concerns include potential noise nuisance from music and waste disposal operations and drinkers leaving the premises late at night.

Applicants Tyneside-based Newco (Ponteland) Ltd were granted a premises licence by Northumberland County Council at a hearing on April 19, but back in February their bid for planning permission was refused.

The firm is now appealing this decision, meaning the final ruling will be down to a Government planning inspector.

## PONTELAND FIRM SECURES HUGE HOUSING CONTRACT

**A Ponteland firm has been selected as part of a consortium to head up a major £347m regeneration scheme, which will see 2,400 new houses built in Gateshead.**

Evolution Gateshead, a consortium of Home Group and Galliford Try, will construct the affordable and private sale homes at 19 sites across Gateshead over the next 15 to 20 years.

Galliford Try, which is headquartered in Leicestershire, has a site in Ponteland known as Galliford Try Partnerships North where it employs 150 staff.

Galliford Try chief executive Greg Fitzgerald said: "I am delighted that Galliford Try will be working with Gateshead Council on the transformation of communities across Gateshead. We look forward to using our expertise in creating quality, sustainable housing on one of the UK's largest regeneration projects."

## THE ART TOUR

Four of our local artists are opening their studios this summer as part of the county-wide Art Tour. Marilyn Bint, Anke Jackson, Christine O'Donnell and Valerie Spencer will welcome the public to their studios on selected days over the weekends of June 11-12, June 18-19, June 25-26 and July 2-3. Details of openings next month.

[www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk)



## DAWN PHOTO SHOOT

Members of Ponteland Photographic Society who managed to wake up at 4am to get photos of the sunrise at Whitley Bay on April 3. See the club's website at [www.pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk](http://www.pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk)

## STORE SEEKS NOMINATION FOR CHARITY PARTNER

**Our nominated Local Charity last year at Sainsbury's Ponteland was St. Oswald's Hospice which cares for long-term and terminally ill patients.**

Colleagues at Sainsbury's took on a variety of challenges including abseiling down a hotel in Newcastle and a midnight walk as well as the usual tombolas and cake stalls to raise £885.

We are now taking nominations for our Local Charity for 2011 so if you would like to be considered (you must be a registered charity) and your charity is in the Ponteland area, please contact either Jason Harmer (Manager) or Lynn Ashforth (PR ambassador) on (01661) 823740 or pop into the store before May 3.



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