

# pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Date set for second  
bistro appeal hearing

School head goes  
out on a high

Award for church  
charity champ

## Community signs up for Diamond Jubilee celebration

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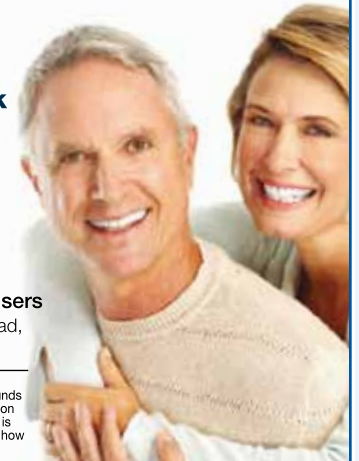


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# Hundreds gather to mark Good Friday



**Members of the Ponteland churches came together on Good Friday morning to commemorate the crucifixion.**

After services in each of the churches there were about 300 people on Coates Green. A large wooden cross was brought out of St Mary's, and raised on the Green. The story from the Bible was read and two hymns were sung.

The Vicar - the Reverend Peter Barham - commented that no-one who was at the crucifixion would believe that, 2,000 years later in a village north of the Roman Empire, Christians were sharing their faith.

Photos by Keith Robertson

# Date set for second bistro planning appeal

The next round in the long running battle of the bistro will see a second appeal heard later this month.

In the February issue we reported how Northumberland County Council had rejected a planning application for a second time for plans to turn the former Co-op and Wine Rack store at Bell Villas into a two storey wine bar and restaurant.

Officers had recommended approval, saying issues of lack of marketing of the site and loss of retail space which had led to refusal last year – later backed by a Government planning inspector at appeal – had been “comprehensively overcome” following new evidence of advertising activity and the availability of other nearby vacant shops.

But members of the council’s West Area Planning Committee rejected the application by six votes to one, saying: “The proposal would result in the loss of existing retail floor space within the Ponteland commercial and business centre for which the applicant has not demonstrated compelling exceptional circumstances.”

The plans had generated 19 letters of objection from neighbouring residents from the Ryehaugh Estate and businesses, two petitions signed by 170 people, and objections from Ponteland Town Council, Civic Society and Methodist Church and MP Guy Opperman.

Developers have submitted a second appeal and a county council spokesman said the hearing date had now been set: “The Planning Inspectorate have confirmed that the planning appeal hearing will be heard on Wednesday 30th May in the Council Chamber, Prospect House, Hexham, starting at 10am.”



An artists' impression of the new surgery entrance

## ‘High end’ dentistry on your doorstep

### State-of-the-art facilities planned for refurbished surgery

**Dental patients in Ponteland will soon be able to access a range of new services and treatments on their doorstep, after work started on the transformation of a popular local surgery.**

In January experienced dental surgeons Kevin Higgins and Richard Winter took over the surgery on Bell Villas opposite the Sainsbury supermarket, following the retirement of John Hallam after 28 years.

Last month work started on a full scale refurbishment to create two state-of-the-art surgeries, an imaging suite and a dedicated sterilisation room, along with a new front entrance, accessible toilet and larger, open plan waiting room.

Once completed, the Higgins & Winter practice will be able to offer new treatments including high end restorative dentistry, implants and facial aesthetics, as well as a traditional family dental service for all ages. Opening hours will also be extended to increase accessibility and provide convenient appointment times.

Father-of-three Richard, who had been with the Kingston Park Dental Practice for 12 years, has a special interest in restorative and implant dentistry. Among his previous posts was a spell as lead dentist on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean and a teaching post at Newcastle Dental Hospital, and he is a tutor for the northern region for the Faculty of General Dental Practice.



Kevin Higgins (left) and Richard Winter

Richard said: “We have been delighted with the response since Kevin and I took over in January, with a significant increase in patient numbers already. The refurbishment, which will give us both the capacity and state-of-the-art facilities to further expand our services and treatments, is being staged to minimise disruption to patients. For example, the first surgery is already complete.”

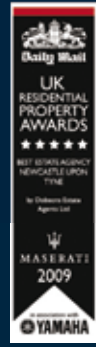
Kevin, who has been a dentist for 20 years, was latterly with the Darras Hall Dental Practice for seven years and is also actively involved with the training and mentoring of younger dentists.

The father-of-one, who leads on implant and cosmetic dentistry as well as dental sedation and general surgery, added: “Once the works are completed this summer we plan to hold open events where anyone can pop in to meet us, have a tour of the new facilities and find out about all the new treatments and services we will be offering.”

You can find out more about the new Higgins and Winter Dental Practice at their website at [higginsandwinterdental.com](http://higginsandwinterdental.com) or call the surgery on 01661 872979.

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## ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Annual Town Meeting was held at 7pm prior to the usual Town Council meeting. It was attended by a number of residents as well as Ponteland county councillors. The Mayor presented his annual report, before presenting June Reed with the Meritorious Service Award in recognition of all her work with St Mary's Church in Ponteland over the last 20 years. He then invited questions from the public in attendance. Various questions were raised in relation to parking on Thornhill Road and the forthcoming introduction of single yellow lines, answered by County Councillor Richard Dodd who had been working on this scheme for some time. A question was also raised about the standard of grass cutting in certain areas. It was explained that ISOS Housing who owned some of the grassed areas in Ponteland had awarded the contract for grass cutting to a private contractor who had not yet carried out any work.

## GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### Ponteland Youth Service

Further to discussions at the last meeting, the Youth Services Manager for the West Area Ashley Brown supplied a list of items he would wish to implement if the grant application was successful. The Council approved a grant of £5,500.

### Ponteland URC Church (supported by Diagonal Alternatives and Age UK)

This application had been deferred from the last meeting pending receipt of additional information. A grant of £250 was approved.

### Darras Hall Estate Committee

A grant of £600 was approved following an application from the Estate Committee seeking a contribution from the Town Council towards the upkeep of the bridle path.

### Community Action Northumberland

A letter from the above organisation seeking a donation towards the

cost of providing their service was considered and a grant of £75 was approved.

### Request for assistance towards gardens at Athol House

A resident had submitted a request to the Council for assistance towards providing plants for Athol House. The Town Council could not give grants to individuals but it was agreed to provide goods in kind up to the value of £100.

### Friends of Ponteland Park – request for provision of seat at Oxbow Lake Dipping Platform

The Friends had been successful in obtaining a grant from the Big Lottery Fund in respect of the installation of a Dipping Platform at the Oxbow Lake, and the Council agreed to purchase the seat and meet the cost of installation.

## PROJECTS REPORT

### West Road Easy Entrance

It was anticipated that work would start on this project in the week commencing April 16.

### Car Park at Fox Covert Lane

Permission had been given by Northumberland County Council to remove the hedge and to carry out some light crown lifting of the tree. This work would be carried out imminently.

### Coping Stones at Waitrose Bridge

The order has been placed for this work which will hopefully be carried out in the near future.

### Street Information Signs

The actual boards for the signs had been installed and further amendments to the maps were being made.

### Coates Green Path Repairs

The order for this work has been placed and will be carried out shortly.

### Park path lighting project

Drawings showing the proposed site of the lights have been prepared.

### War Memorial

Further to the kind offer received from Strettlés, an order has been placed to have the Memorial cleaned and re-lettered.

## ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Various items were discussed by the Working Party at their meeting held on March 19, including the potential sites for trees which had been offered by Ponteland Lions Club. It was agreed that this would be referred back to the Working Party for further discussion.

## HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on March 21 and it was agreed to install bollards at the land at North Road/ Thornhill Road junction and also at Brewery Lane. A proposal to control the rabbit population on the bridle path had been approved pending clarification over liability. Various proposals and suggestions for traffic calming on Fox Covert Lane were approved and it was agreed that discussions should be held with the County Council as to the practicalities of the introduction of a 20mph limit.

## DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

A verbal update on the current situation relating to the Jubilee was given. In relation to the Loyal Address - a congratulatory message - arrangements were being made with local organisations to get signatures from their members. Councillors were asked to obtain signatures within their own wards. There would be some limited signing sessions at the local supermarkets. Local shops and businesses had agreed to provide facilities for signing. Arrangements were in hand for an Exhibition to be held at the Memorial Hall from June 2 to 5 and there had already been significant interest from local groups. Thanks were due to John Turner of the History Society who was helping to organise the event. Designs are being drawn up in respect of the Heritage Sign. There are two potential sponsors interested in the idea. In relation

to the Jubilee weekend, the main event for the Town Council was the lighting of the Beacon on Monday June 4. This would take place in the late evening and there would be various food stalls etc on Coates Green. It was also proposed to have fireworks. This was being organised in conjunction with the Diamond Inn and other public houses and restaurants would be involved. It was intended to have bunting erected on Main Street and at Broadway. This was on order and there was a potential sponsor for the purchase of the materials. Arrangements for the Music in the Park event were progressing well. All of the local schools would be taking part in the event to be held on Sunday July 8 from 2pm until 5pm.

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Jones reported that a motion had been put forward in relation to the formulation of a policy in respect of wind farms which had been defeated. She also reported on progress that was being made in respect of works at the back of the Broadway shops, and on changes to the mobile library service which would have an adverse effect on the more rural areas. In relation to the Ageing Well project, she reported that approval had been given by NCC to continue with the pilot schemes and extend this further afield.

## MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor had attended the opening of the McCarthy & Stone development on March 29. He also reminded the Council of the Civic Service which would be held on Sunday May 27.

*This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council monthly meeting held on April 11.*



## Fashion just keeps getting better

The Metrocentre Style Team are on hand to give you the low down on the latest seasonal trends and best bargains out there.

The Style Team operate a series of Style Pods throughout the year which offer a one-stop-shop for seasonal trends including Jean Genie, Special Occasion and everyone's wardrobe staple the LBD.

The next Style Pod is Jean Genie, 12th & 13th May, to help you find that perfect pair of jeans to suit your shape, style & pocket!

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# Church charity champ recognised

**A dedicated church volunteer who has helped raise thousands of pounds for charity through fundraising concerts has received a coveted award from the Mayor of Ponteland.**

June Reed has been associated with St Mary's Church for more than 20 years, carrying out the duties of organist for many weddings and funerals.

In her role as Director of St. Mary's Singers she has staged the regular concerts at St Mary's and various other locations over the years. These concerts are always very well attended, not just because of the local choir but because of the quality soloists that June engages to perform.

There are usually two concerts per year in the Church with one arranged especially near to Christmas. It is impossible to say how much money these concerts have raised for charity but it certainly runs into many thousands.

June also arranges the music performances in St Mary's during the Ponteland bi-annual Art, Music and Flower Festival.

In accepting the Meritorious Service Award and an engraved memento from Mayor Peter Cowey at the April meeting of the Town Council, June said she was surprised and delighted to be recognised for doing something that she is so passionate about.

The Town Council has presented the awards to citizens who have made an outstanding contribution to the community since 1997, previously in conjunction with Castle Morpeth Borough Council.



Photo by Keith Robertson

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## PONTELAND LIONS SUPPORT RNLI VOLUNTEERS

Members of Ponteland Lions recently visited their local RNLI Lifeboat Station at Cullercoats to present a cheque for £2,000 to purchase new, state-of-the-art life jackets for the entire crew.

The new design features improved buoyancy and greater flexibility, with a variety of storage features for vital accessories such as flares, lights, linking strips and a knife.

Volunteer crew members are delighted to now have individually issued life jackets, adjusted to their own dimensions which will fit immediately when donned, saving precious moments during the rush to launch the lifeboat.

The donation from Ponteland Lions was funded by the sponsorship raised at their Annual Swimathon held last November, an event generously supported by many local schools, organisations and small businesses.





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# Your letters

Anger at damage to a floral Garden of Remembrance, car parking problems and a thank you to volunteers in this month's letters...

## Dog owners and horse riders trash Garden of Remembrance

In October 2010 a representative from Marie Curie approached the Friends of Ponteland Park asking if we would be prepared to plant a Garden of Remembrance somewhere in the park.

After permission was given by the Town Council and a site chosen, the people of Ponteland were invited to come along and help to create this garden, which meant the planting of some 10,000 Camelot daffodils.

Our community turned out in number - young and not so young, scouts, the Mayor, Guy Opperman MP - and the site was blessed by the Rev Peter Barham. By lunchtime all the daffodils had been planted and we awaited the following spring with anticipation, and were not disappointed.

However we were to be disappointed to find that some people had no regard for the garden and would let their dogs run and play irrespective of the fact that they were destroying many numbers of beautiful daffodils.

Perhaps that was a one off but no, this year the same thing has happened and even horses have been ridden through the daffs. Some hundreds of flower heads were broken off. I have personally collected armfuls of the daffs rather than leave them to wilt and die.

Do the folk who let their dogs run through the daffodils and ride their horses through them have no thought for the reason they have been planted? Can I remind them that they have been planted in memory of loved ones who have died or suffered from cancer and for the wonderful work carried out by the Marie Curie foundation for people suffering from the disease?

Could the daffodils not be left alone to flower next year I wonder?

**Coral Wilmot**  
Friends of Ponteland Park

## How can I benefit from a new levy on free parking?

Somebody called "Parking Services" has signed and sent us a letter regarding the above.

This allows us to purchase a permit for £15 to park at specified times in specified car parks in Alnwick, Berwick, Hexham and Morpeth.

There is a sweeping statement saying that this permit "will benefit all residents of Northumberland".

I fail to see how it will benefit me as, under the soon-to be defunct scheme, I could park in Morpeth for NO charge at certain times.

Who is fooling whom?

**John Percy**  
Woodlands  
Ponteland

## Glad I'm not the only one who thinks there is a parking issue

In the April edition of the magazine there is a letter about parking problems at the leisure centre area at weekends.

I do hope that this letter was seen by staff in the Highways/Transport Dept at Northumberland County Council. Since October 2010 I and many others have been trying to convince NCC staff that there is a shortage of parking (public and private) in Ponteland and this does cause problems.

So far we have failed in our attempts.

They consider that there is adequate car parking in Ponteland, with the public car parks on Thornhill Road and behind the Merton Way shops.

I can offer no solution, but it is useful to acknowledge that there is a problem.

**Jennifer Hardy**  
Ryehaugh  
Ponteland

## Residents' bays using for pub parking overflow

Regarding your letter from Norman Macfarlane 'sensible solution needed to resolve weekend parking issue' - I am a resident of Ryehaugh, Ponteland.

And I am becoming increasingly frustrated when I can't get parked in the bays (provided for the residents of the flats in Ryehaugh), at weekends due to people ignorantly using them as some kind of Diamond/Rendezvous overflow car park.

Some don't even collect them the following day after a night out and leave them in our bays for the whole weekend! I think we should get a permit per flat and a spare to use for our friends and family when they visit, as each flat does actually come with its own bay in the lease!

**Name and address supplied**

## Volunteers are the heart of Ponteland

I often wonder when I read some of your letters if the people of Ponteland and district realise how many volunteers give their time to helping, raising funds and assisting others.

I, for one, did not realise how many committees and groups of people there are in church halls, the Memorial Hall, Merton Hall, Ponteland Park, the Lions, the Round Table, your parish councillors, all the various groups and clubs for young people etc.

The list goes on and on; the volunteers all work tirelessly to improve the surroundings and lives of the people young and old in Ponteland and district.

I would like to commend you all for the energy, enthusiasm and time you give.

The heart of Ponteland are the volunteers. I would like to thank you all and I am sorry if your group did not get a mention but you are so great in numbers. Every single one of you deserves a BIG THANK YOU.

**Christine Greenwell**  
Station Cottages, Ponteland

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 June issue will be delivered on May 31 and June 1. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday May 14. 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 3 from 7.30pm at St. Matthew's RC Church Hall, Ponteland.

## 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 4, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see <http://www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html>

## County Council surgeries

Your local Northumberland County Councillors Richard Dodd, Peter Jackson, Veronica Jones and Eileen Armstrong are available to meet constituents on the first Saturday of every month from 10am-11am at Waitrose supermarket, Ponteland and outside the Co-op Broadway, Darras Hall. Their next surgery is on May 5.

## Ancestry: Online Family History Course for Beginners

Learn the secrets of tracing your family with Anne Newbury of Northumberland Museum and Archive Service, Woodhorn, at Ponteland Library on Tuesday May 8 from 10am – 12noon. Places are limited - £2 charge. Please book early to avoid disappointment. For further details and to book contact Ponteland Library on (01661) 823594.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on May 14 is Professor John Derry 'Petain - The Pessimistic Patriot' and this is also our Annual General Meeting. 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.

## Ponteland Floral Art Club

Ponteland Floral Art Club, Ponteland Memorial Hall, Tuesday May 15, 7.30pm. Demonstration by Helen Jamieson of Rowlands Gill (A). Bring a friend free.

## Free coffee morning

A free coffee morning with [mylibrary.co.uk](http://mylibrary.co.uk) on Saturday May 19 from 10am-12noon at Ponteland Library. Come and see the new library website.

## Hardy Plant Society North East Group Grand Plant Sale

Saturday May 19 from 10.30am-12.30pm at Stannington Village Hall. £1 entry. Free for Hardy Plant Society members and children. The plant sale is being organised by the North East Group of the Hardy Plant Society. Good quality and reasonably priced plants grown by members of the group will be available. The members have a wide knowledge and interest of plants and their care and will be on hand to offer assistance and advice if required. Garden sundries and refreshments will also be available. The raffle prize



is a tour of the garden of chairperson, Heather Russell, followed by tea and scones for up to four people. The garden featured on BBC Gardeners' World in March 2012 (pictured) and is only occasionally open to the public so this is a rare opportunity for a private viewing. More information at [www.hardy-plant.org.uk/groups/northeast](http://www.hardy-plant.org.uk/groups/northeast)

## Rotary Club of Ponteland concert

Lemington Male Voice Choir and The Performing Arts Group of Sunderland University at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Saturday May 19 at 7pm. Tickets costing £8 from Mackley & Steven Opticians, 25 Main Street, Ponteland, tel (01661) 823374 or any Rotarian.

## Ponteland Community Partnership AGM

The 2012 Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership will be held on Wednesday May 23 at 7pm in Merton Hall, Ponteland. Nominations for membership of the Executive Council, 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 9 to Shirley Hill, Hon Secretary, Ponteland Community Partnership, 90, Runnymede Road, Ponteland, NE20 9HH.

## Ponteland Party in the Park

Sunday 17th June from 1.30pm. Entertainment for all the family - hope to see you there. Admission only £1/ children under 5 free. See article on p14.

## Ponteland's weekly market

Ponteland's weekly market at Merton Way shopping centre is on between 9am and 4pm each Friday.

## May at Merton Hall

Open Monday to Saturday for hot and cold drinks from 9.30am – 11.15am. The hall is also available to rent. Our next away day will be to Cramlington shopping centre from 10am – 2pm on Thursday May 31. Cost £5 each. Wanted: Merton Hall needs a digital camera and a change counting machine. If you can help please call (01661) 872917. For full details of Diamond Jubilee celebration events see p13.

## Ponteland Netball

Did you used to play netball or are you new to the game? Come and join us for a fun and sociable workout. All levels welcome. Every Monday 8pm-9pm term time in the sports hall behind Ponteland Middle School. Contact Jane at [pontnetball@gmail.com](mailto:pontnetball@gmail.com) or on 07867 483551.



## Ponteland Golf Club

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To discuss the available options and fees, or for further general information, please contact:

Secretary Greg Waugh at:

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# School head goes out on a high

## Ofsted praise for 'well above average' achievement

Retiring Ponteland Community High School headteacher Stephen Prandle will be going out on a high after a snap inspection by Ofsted praised achievement as "well above average".

The school, which underwent its latest Ofsted inspection on March 21-22, has just received the inspection team's verdict.

The report begins by describing Ponteland High as "a good school," and adds: "Achievement is strong overall and the progress of students is increasing. Students attain academic standards which are well above the national average."

Behaviour at Ponteland High gets the thumbs-up from the inspectors, too, with the report commenting: "The behaviour of students around the school is good. They are polite and respectful to adults and each other and are calm and responsible in the sometimes busy corridors and dining area. Incidents of racist behaviour and bullying are rare. Behaviour is good or better in the large majority of lessons."

The report also highlights:

- the effectiveness of Ponteland High's leadership, and its "clear, shared vision for the school"
- how students and parents believe their school provides is a safe, positive environment
- how Ponteland High provides a good model for the wider community due to its work on Fairtrade – it recently received official recognition as a Fairtrade School

- how students and parents enjoy playing an active role in helping make their school even better.

Mr Prandle, pictured, who is retiring this summer, said: "Everyone at the school deserves congratulations for their part in the Ponteland High success story. I particularly want to thank those students who met with the inspectors for their honesty and support.

"Ofsted's inspection system has become tougher than ever before this year, and lots of schools are finding themselves downgraded since their last inspection.

"So, even though it might look as though we haven't moved forward from our last inspection in March 2009, maintaining our "Good" rating actually shows that we have improved to the extent that we match Ofsted's much more rigorous demands.

"The report provides guidance on what we need to do to attain Ofsted's gold standard 'Outstanding' rating. We are already making great progress, and I know the excellent staff we have at Ponteland High can make still more."

Associate Headteacher Anita Brown added: "It was gratifying to see how impressed the inspectors were with behaviour at Ponteland High, as well as with our work on involving students and parents in school development, and



the pride our youngsters take in their involvement."

This inspection was carried out with just two days' notice. Before coming to their conclusions, the inspectors:

- observed 49 lessons taught by 49 teachers
- visited morning registration sessions and assemblies
- held meetings with senior and middle leaders, Chair of the Governing Body Mr Mike Brown, and groups of students
- examined key documents, such as the school's improvement plan, records of attendance and behaviour, and behaviour logs
- scrutinised a broad range of students' work through sampling their books and files, as well as visiting lessons
- considered completed questionnaires from 142 students, 28 members of staff and 160 parents and carers.

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## Bus service changes improve punctuality

Changes to bus services serving Ponteland and Darras Hall which followed a raft of complaints from passengers appear to have improved punctuality.

At the April meeting between Stagecoach and Ponteland Town Council, it was agreed that the changes introduced by Stagecoach in January had largely stabilised the timekeeping of the services although a few issues had been raised via the bususers@pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk email address.

Stagecoach promised to investigate these and report back at the next meeting.

The subject of improving timetable information was raised and Ian Coe, the Northumberland County Council representative at the meeting, promised to give this matter a high priority.

Ponteland Town Council has agreed to take on the task of placing the timetables in the frames at bus stops but cannot do this until the paper timetables have been produced by the county council.

The county council was also asked to deal with the problem of overhanging trees in Darras Hall and it was agreed that an inspection is required, followed by letters to property owners who can be held liable.

At the meeting Stagecoach explained that, since January 29, buses from other routes were being combined with the buses used on the Ponteland services, so that any late running buses would be replaced at Eldon Square by another 'on time' vehicle, bringing more reliability to the services.



# Diamond Jubilee

## celebrations set to go off with a bang



### The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations are set to go off with a bang in Ponteland over the next month.

Highlights include a four day exhibition at the Memorial Hall, lighting of the Jubilee Beacon on top of St Mary's Church and a firework display at Coates Green.

Bunting will be up around Ponteland and Darras Hall, while Merton Hall is holding a special Jubilee Tea hosted by Ponteland Floral Art Club and the Diamond Inn will also be joining in the festivities with its own events.

The exhibition at the Memorial Hall will run from 10am to 4pm from Saturday June 2 until Tuesday June 5 and include a comprehensive display covering all aspects of life in Ponteland from churches, schools, organisations, clubs and societies in the village.

Ponteland Local History Society has also agreed to put on a display to show how the area has developed during the 60 years of Her Majesty's reign - also at the Memorial Hall - between Saturday June 2 and Monday June 4.

Coun Robin Ramsay, who recently received his MBE from The Queen, is leading the Town Council's efforts to mark the Jubilee. He said: "This celebration is really bringing the whole community together.

"Ponteland is to present a Loyal Address (letter of congratulations) to the Queen. Signatures in support of this venture are coming from many sources, including schools, local organisations, shops and residents. The pages are adorned with over 200 drawings provided by the schools and the sheets will be bound together with the Loyal Address in a special book.

"The Loyal Address will be signed by representatives of the community - the Mayor, Vicar, headteacher of the High School, Ponteland school pupil Mia Philo-France, aged five, and our own special centenarian Geoff Willey - and there will also be public signing sessions at Waitrose, Sainsbury's and The Co-op this month.

"It is hoped to exhibit the volume at the exhibition before it is received by the Duchess of Northumberland as the Queen's representative on June 6 at Alnwick Castle."

Any organisation wanting to get involved in the celebrations or events should contact the Town Council at enquiries@pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk or on (01661) 825092.

*Cover shot: Mia Philo-France, five, of Ponteland First School signs the Loyal Address with Mayor Peter Cowey.*

*Above: Centenarian Geoff Willey signs the Loyal Address*

*The winning picture in the Jubilee competition by Eva Sykes, of Ponteland Middle School.*

*Photos by Trevor Walker*

### DIAMOND JUBILEE EVENTS

#### Railway Films to celebrate the Jubilee

Sunday May 20 at 3pm and 7.30pm St Mary's Church Hall - 1935 film from the Post Office called "The King's Stamp", "Elizabethan Express" (1954), and a historical travelogue "The England of Elizabeth" (1957), as well as the Royal Train and Royal Events. Admission free, donations please, doughnuts at the interval.

#### Civic Service/Jubilee Celebration

Sunday May 27 at 2.30pm - the annual Civic Service, which usually fills St Mary's, will also be our Jubilee Celebration. The Town Council invites every organisation in the village, and this year we will have some Royal music and give thanks to God for Her Majesty's reign. All welcome.

#### Memorial Hall Jubilee exhibition

10am-4pm Sat June 2 to Tues June 5. Free admission.

#### Lighting of Jubilee Beacon and firework display

Coates Green: Mon June 4 at 10pm

#### Merton Hall open day

Tues June 5 from 10am-2pm. Drop in day for tea, coffee, cake, sandwiches. Entertainment: 11am - Imagine5 and 12.15pm - U3A choir led by Mr B Prickett

#### Jubilee Tea

Merton Hall - Thurs June 7 from 2pm - 4pm Extend the Jubilee Celebrations with an afternoon tea hosted by Ponteland Floral Art Club. Cost £3.



Families enjoy the entertainment at last year's event. Photo by Trevor Walker.

# Party in the Park: Sunday June 17

By Barry L Shaw

**Final preparations are being made for one of the most popular events in the Ponteland calendar - Party in the Park.**

This year the event will be opened by Caroline Pryer, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland, and entertainment includes The Tyneside Steel Band and a demonstration by Birds of Prey together with a tea tent, BBQ and the Arts & Craft tent.

The Party in the Park is organised by the Christian Churches in Ponteland: St. Mary's Church; St Matthew's Roman Catholic Church; Ponteland Methodist Church; and the United Reformed Church.

It starts at 1.30pm on Sunday June 17 and admission costs £1/ children under 5 free. Hope to see you there!

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## Nominations sought for community leaders

**The 2012 Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership will be held on Wednesday, May 23 at 7pm in Merton Hall, Ponteland.**

Nominations for membership of the Executive Council, 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 9 to:

Shirley Hill, Hon Secretary, Ponteland Community Partnership, 90, Runnymede Road, Ponteland, Newcastle upon Tyne NE20 9HH.

### POLICE WARNING AFTER ATTEMPTED BURGLARY

**Police are asking residents to be vigilant after an attempted burglary in Ponteland.**

Between 8pm on Sunday April 15 and 11am on Monday April 16, burglars tried to get inside a house off Jackson Avenue. They were unable to get inside and nothing was stolen.

Officers are appealing for anyone with any information to contact them on 101 ext -69191.

Residents in the area are being asked to report any suspicious behaviour to officers and to lock their windows and doors over night and when leaving the house.

East Tynedale Neighbourhood Inspector Kevin Oates said: "We've seen a number of burglaries and thefts recently from cars and garages in Ponteland and Darras Hall. These have mainly been where they've been left unlocked and property out on display. Don't make it easy for thieves - lock your cars and keep your belongings safe."

### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE DARRAS HALL ESTATE COMMITTEE

**Chairman Mike Dainty welcomed everyone to the 102nd annual meeting and began by explaining the archive which has been produced to mark the centenary of the Estate.**

The folder outlines the work of the Committee and contains photographs of the houses showing the evolution of the estate. It was available in the office for inspection.

The chairman explained that the rent charge on the 2,586 properties of the Estate needed to cover the next year's costs would be £27 each, a rise of £5. There were 76 properties where the previous charge had not been paid but he emphasised that this was a legal obligation and could be enforced by the courts.

# Can you grow for Ponteland Parish Flower Show?

**Now is the time to consider what you might sow and plant in the garden to produce quality specimens to take to the show.**

The 35th Annual Ponteland Parish Flower Show will be held in The Memorial Hall on Saturday September 8. Exhibits can be staged on Friday night as well as Saturday morning. After judging, the show is open to the public from 1pm on Saturday afternoon. The new schedules will be available in early July; little has changed from last year.

There are plenty of opportunities for everyone in the family to enter classes in the show, including:

- 36 flower classes
- 35 vegetable classes
- five fruit classes
- 12 children's classes
- 15 cookery classes
- eight handicrafts classes
- six painting classes
- two homemade wine classes
- seven photography classes including two classes for children.

Entry fees are only 10p per class for adults and all entry fees for children are free. As well as three prizes per class, there are 22 perpetual trophies awarded each year.

Plan now, plant your garden, take photographs, make wine and preserves, do paintings and show off your skills at Ponteland Parish Flower Show.

For further information or a copy of last year's schedule contact Syd Cowan at [syd.cowan@btinternet.com](mailto:syd.cowan@btinternet.com) or on (01661) 824459.



## New home care service offering job opportunities

**A new service has been launched in Ponteland offering personal care, home help and companionship.**

The not-for-profit social enterprise Pointnorth has been launched in a unique partnership with Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust as a franchise of Home Instead Senior Care, one of the UK's leading providers of home care.

It is the brainchild of GPs at Ponteland Medical Group, who identified a growing need for good quality home care in the village and surrounding rural areas.

Home Instead services include personal care, such as assistance with bathing, dressing, eating and medications, home help services covering all aspects of day-to-day housework and companionship.

Pointnorth is being headed up by Janet Boakes, who has worked for general practices across Northumberland and Newcastle, and is keen to recruit local people with compassionate and caring natures who are interested in working with older people.

She said: "We carefully match clients and caregivers by looking for common areas of interest or life experience so that there can be an immediate connection. We need local people to come forward and be part of our team.

"We only employ people who are absolutely committed to making a difference, and who will treat our clients with dignity and respect whilst working to the highest professional standards. Training is available for those who lack experience in care - the most important attributes are a positive and friendly nature and a desire to help our elderly population."

The Ponteland office of Home Instead will cover the area from Ponteland to Kirkwhelpington in the north, Wylam to the south, Dudley to the east and Great Whittington to the west. For more information visit [www.homeinstead.co.uk/ponteland](http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/ponteland) or call (0191) 605 3148.



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or call **(0191) 605 3148**

# High school trio are region's karting kings

Three Ponteland High School students have once again proven their talent on the race track.

Matthew Graham, 15, Christian Harrison, 17, and Daniel Barber, 18, won the North East Regional Final of the British Schools Karting Championship (BSKC) after gaining an impressive four podium places in six sprint races at Teesside Autodrome over two days.

The talented trio will now go on to compete against the best school and college karting teams from across the country for the second time in the final of the BSKC 2012 at Daytona Milton Keynes, where they will get the chance to be crowned national champions and win a visit to the famous McLaren Technology Centre.

Rising international star Matty, the current CIK-FIA Under 18 world champion, notched up two first places and Dan got a first and second. Chris finished fourth and seventh in his races.

Ponteland High Associate Headteacher Anita Brown said: "Two years ago the same team were third in the national championships and hopefully they may be able to do even better this time.

"With Matty being an Under 18 world champion, Dan being Northern Area champion and Chris an excellent all-round sportsman, we think we have a good chance and everyone at the school is rooting for the team."

The students also came through the first round at the Warden Law circuit in Sunderland with flying colours to make the regional final.

Dan leaves school this summer, hoping to study Mechanical Engineering, while Chris

is also pursuing a science route at A-Level. Matty, meanwhile, has his eyes firmly set on motorsport.

Director of Key Stage 3 Phil Armstrong, who manages the team, said: "It was a thrilling day for everyone involved and I was very proud to see the boys put in a consistent performance throughout the day. They thoroughly deserve their win and have worked hard to earn their place in the national final.

"The sky is the limit for Matty and much depends on who picks him up and how much success he has in the next few years. His parents are doing everything they can to support him, with his teachers making sure he keeps up-to-date with school work when he is on his travels."



Christian Harrison, Matthew Graham and Daniel Barber from Ponteland High School, who won the North East Regional Final of the British Schools Karting Championship.



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## SQUIRREL SUCCESS LANDS SALLY WITH NATIONAL AWARD

The success of a red squirrel group has helped a Ponteland woman to land a national honour.

Sally Hardy was among the winners under the Red Squirrel Survival Trust's awards scheme, which was established to reward the vast army of volunteers working to preserve the under-threat species.

She helped set up Northern Red Squirrels (NRS), which brings independent voluntary groups together across the North East and Cumbria.

Mrs Hardy co-ordinates news and ideas among organisations, and since its launch in March 2008, NRS has attracted more than 40 member groups.

She is also the co-ordinator of Ponteland Red Squirrels. The organisation works to maintain and increase the population of reds in the Ponteland and Darras Hall areas, as well as raise awareness of the fact that without support and preservation measures, numbers will drop through destruction of habitat and catching the squirrel pox virus from grey squirrels.

Mrs Hardy was a joint winner in the category of Leading Light, volunteers who take the red squirrel conservation message out into the community, along with fellow NRS co-ordinator Jackie Foott from Cumbria.

She said: "I was very pleased to win the award, although I feel that my part of the accolade is down to all the red squirrel volunteers in the North East. Communication is very important in what we do and as well as keeping each other informed, groups can share best practice. It can also help to motivate volunteers if they hear about the progress made by others across the region."



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Ponteland USA walkers admired the variety of sculpture on the Wearside sculpture trail at Sunderland.



The weather changed and blizzard conditions swept the county on 3 April. The spring blooms were weighted down with the wet snow.

# Four seasons in one day!

By Muriel Sobo

**Who knows what the weather will be like outside as you read this? A quote about Britain says it does not have a climate, only weather, and we all know there can be four seasons in one day!**

The warm temperatures and blue skies in March lifted the spirits and brought out the gardeners, the walkers and the tourists. The County Council had organised free entry to some of our major attractions on a glorious weekend, as trailed in the March PNV, and county residents came out in their thousands to experience some fantastic offerings.



Families picnicked and played in the walled gardens at Wallington.

## HAMPER DONATED TO BOOST FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

**Sainsburys Ponteland were delighted recently to support local organisations during the Fairtrade fortnight.**

A hamper of Fairtrade goods which are sold instore was donated to Steve Helm, Fairtrade coordinator for Ponteland, to display at events held during the fortnight. This highlighted the goods readily available for customers to purchase in order to support Fairtrade. The hamper was then raffled at the end of the period to raise further funds.

In addition, 1st Ponteland Beaver Scouts were invited to take part in a Fairtrade Treasure Hunt around the store. A chaotic but fun hour was enjoyed by the Beavers and they were amazed as to how many items were supplied by the Fairtrade scheme. They couldn't wait to go home and tell their parents what could be bought to support the scheme!

At the end of the evening, the Beavers enjoyed some Fairtrade goodies and complete posters to display in the store.





# Garden shed thieves spring into action

By PC Lee Davison  
Ponteland Rural Neighbourhood Beat Manager



**There have been a total of five crimes reported in the Ponteland area in the period from March 15 to April 12.**

They break down as follows:

- one burglary (dwelling)
- one theft
- one fraud
- one assault
- one criminal damage.

There have been three arrests in relation to these offences and further enquiries are ongoing which may lead to further arrests.

With Spring now upon us, police are reminding green-fingered residents be on their guard against light-fingered thieves as the force-wide month-long crackdown on burglary continues throughout April.

The lighter nights and milder weather will soon send gardeners stocking up on

tools to transform their gardens. But well stocked sheds can attract the attention of opportunist thieves. If sheds are located some distance from the house, or on an allotment, break-ins can also go unseen and unheard.

Please ensure that property is not left out, either in garden or driveway where items can become easy pickings for thieves. To protect property stored in sheds or outbuildings ensure adequate locks are fitted and consider fitting a shed alarms.

People can prevent garden intruders by installing strong fences or gates and growing thorny hedges around the boundary of the property. Good quality locks should be fitted to gates and fixed so that they can't be reached over the fence and external lighting should be installed - a dusk to dawn security light is recommended. It's also a good idea to keep detailed records of your property inside a shed.

The police surgeries for the next month are:

- Saturday May 26 at 9.30am at Merton Hall with CSO Ruddick.
- Saturday June 2 at 11.30am at Belsay Shop with PC Davison.

The next Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) meeting will be held on Tuesday May 15 at 9.30am at Sure Start Children's Centre, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The first 30 minutes of the meeting is open to the general public, offering an opportunity to discuss or raise issues with all partner agencies.

There will also be a Neighbourhood Engagement Day on Thursday May 31 where you can meet members of the local policing team at Merton Way, Ponteland, from 10am – 12noon and Broadway, Darras Hall, from 1pm - 3pm.



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