

pontnews&views

FREE monthly magazine for Ponteland and district

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James and Molly share Young Musician award

**Three firms shortlisted for village centre
revamp contract**

**Council loses mart retirement
complex battle**

Youngsters celebrate youth centre launch

Lilian finally gets WW2 honour

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If there is an issue you are concerned about please do not hesitate to contact me. I hold constituency surgeries in Ponteland and can also be contacted through my Westminster or Constituency offices. Alternatively you can keep up to date with my latest news and send me a message by logging on to www.peteratkinson.com.



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resolution

WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY FOR A BETTER FUTURE



Pictured at the youth centre opening with a group of Ponteland Community High students are Castle Morpeth Mayor Coun Irene Brumwell, headteacher Stephen Prandle and George McCreedy, Youth Service Consultant Manager.

Great news for village youngsters as long awaited youth centre opens

By Geoff Brown

Ponteland teenagers have a new £91,000 youth centre, thanks to two years of solid fundraising by local organisations and individuals.

The building was opened on July 17 by Coun Irene Brumwell, Mayor of Castle Morpeth Borough Council, in a plaque-unveiling ceremony attended by 60 people, including students from Ponteland Community High School and local middle schools.

Ponteland Community High student Tom Jesper, 14, said: "This is really significant for local young people, as we have had nothing like this before. I'm really looking forward to using the centre, particularly the pool table."

Also attending was Borough Councillor Frank Harrington, who first put forward the idea of a youth centre for Ponteland 20 years ago when chair of the former parish council. He said: "It has taken a tremendously long time for this to happen,

but I'm delighted that the centre is here at last."

Coun Brumwell added: "This is a marvellous facility. How fantastic that it is now here, to be used and enjoyed by so many young people."

Based near the existing pre- and after-school club headquarters in the corner of the high school's visitor car park, the new centre can cater for up to fifty 13-19 year-olds at a time. Any young person living in the village can attend.

Youthwork consultant George McCreedy will stage a series of taster activities, such as games, urban art and circus skills classes, from 1pm - 4pm on Tuesday 19 August and Tuesday 26 August. A full programme will begin in September, when the centre will be open from 6.30pm - 9.30pm during

evenings and weekends, as well as during school lunch breaks.

Young people attending the centre will be able to seek out help and advice on relationships, alcohol and drug misuse and other issues, as well as participating in a wide range of social activities. The centre will be managed by newly-appointed Advanced Youthwork Practitioner Angus Ramlal.

Funding for the centre has come from a variety of sources, including Castle Morpeth Borough Council, Ponteland Town Council, Northumberland County Council, local churches, Ponteland Community Partnership, South East Northumberland Recreation and Arts Centre, Ponteland Partnership of Schools Extended Services, Ponteland Youth Service and from fundraising events organised by local young people themselves.



Health Services on your Doorstep

Consultant-led Services at Ponteland Primary Care Centre

Northumbria Healthcare consultants are running clinics and carrying out minor operations at Ponteland Primary Care Centre seeing patients more quickly and saving them journeys to hospital.

Consultants in orthopaedics, general surgery, pain management, gynaecology and medicine hold clinics at the centre so patients can have their outpatient appointments and aftercare locally.

Consultants can access scan and x-ray images from their computer in the GP practice. Patients benefit by receiving quicker treatment, in some cases the same day, at the on-site minor operating theatre. Patients registered with Ponteland Medical Group, White Medical Group and Scots Gap can take advantage of this service.

Northumbria Healthcare, who run this service, manage hospitals in North Tyneside and Northumberland including three general hospitals in Hexham, North Tyneside and Wansbeck.

Isobel tells her story

One month ago 80-year-old Isobel Burn from Stamfordham was referred by her GP to see consultant orthopedic surgeon Christopher Gibbons. But Isobel didn't have to go along to her local hospital to see Mr Gibbons, he came to her.

Isobel was suffering from tingling and numbness in the fingers in her right hand. She explains: "I was in terrible pain when I went to see my GP. I was having trouble sleeping and the pain killers weren't helping, I found myself pacing the bedroom floor at two o'clock in the morning."

Isobel was seen at Ponteland Primary Care Centre by Christopher Gibbons, an orthopedic surgeon who specialises in upper limbs and carries out small procedures in the minor operating theatre at the health centre.

He advised Isobel she had carpal tunnel syndrome and needed an operation.

He performed this the very same day with great success. Isobel continues: "I saw Mr Gibbons in the morning and had my operation in the afternoon. It was all over in about 20 minutes, I had a local anaesthetic and all I felt was the injection."



Patient Isobel Burn with orthopaedic consultant Christopher Gibbons

"I wasn't worried about having it done, I was just relieved to get it sorted. It was a little painful that day but I was fine the next morning. It took about a week for me to get my grip back."

Two weeks after the operation on her right hand, Isobel experienced similar problems with her left hand and returned to her GP. She was again referred to Christopher Gibbons and two weeks later was at the health centre having the same operation on the other hand.

Isobel said: "With the first operation I had been putting off having it done but with the other hand, as soon as I realised it was going the same way, I just wanted it sorted quickly."

"It's good to have a service like this at the health centre. It's so much more relaxed, there's no getting stressed about having to go to hospital. Both times when I've been referred by my GP I've seen the consultant in the morning, gone home and had some lunch, then returned to have my operation in the afternoon. It's a fantastic service."





Main pic – Mayor Irene Brumwell with Syd Cowan and Reverend Ian Suttie. Inset – a sketch of the church.



Centenary Garden

opened at Methodist Church

By Muriel Sobo

The Methodist building in Ponteland was opened in 1908 and replaced the first Methodist Chapel built in 1841, so it was appropriate to celebrate the centenary of the present church.

The land at the back of the parking lot has been improved, the grass cut and access created for all abilities. The church groups will use it as an outside room and extend the variety of possible activities.

A number of members have been very involved in this project, including Syd Cowan, who raised the funds, Bryan Ashford, who sorted out the plans and Reverend Ian Suttie, who kept them all in order.

Ponteland Councillor and Castle Morpeth's last Mayor, Irene Brumwell, performed the opening on a warm and relaxing summer's evening with a good turnout of members and friends. A flower festival completed a wonderful weekend of displays featuring the life of the church, fellowship and good food.

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Your Letters...



Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views. The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters published, for legal or other reasons. All letters submitted should include the writer's name and address.

Keith Mannings' letter last month attacking the Parish Council's change to Town Council status has provoked two stern responses.

Letter's claim an 'insult'

As Mr Mannings has been a resident of Ponteland for over 10 years, I assume that he and his family do appreciate the many services and organisations Ponteland offers residents.

The majority of these are run by a small, largely unrecognised, army of dedicated volunteers, who like local councillors donate a vast amount of their own free time purely for the benefit of the community.

To imply that the local councillors have re-designated the Parish Council to a Town Council for their own aggrandisement is an insult to all its members and far from the truth.

All the council members I have worked with during my past 14 years as a member of the council have given freely of their own time to try and improve facilities for the benefit of the community.

New councillors soon appreciate that while there are many excellent ideas for improvements put forward by enthusiastic members of local organisations, owing to the centralisation of grant funding there is rarely the funding available to go ahead with improvements.

Ponteland councillors have long been frustrated that councils classified as town councils but many of which have much smaller populations, get larger grants than parish councils, so decided that the re-designation as a town council was a small price to pay if it would attract improved funding to finance the many improvements our community organisations so desperately need and desire.

I wonder whether Mr Mannings gives so willingly of his own free time to our community life. If he, or any other like minded residents, wish to help the community, I would love to hear from anyone interested in voluntary work so that I can put them in touch with those who can best use their services.

*Coun Peter Charleton
Ponteland North Ward*

Letter was 'an ill informed rant'

Tosh Indeed! As a councillor I have found the letters in PNV relating to current activities to be interesting, informed, critical, helpful and largely constructive.

However it seems to me that K Mannings letter (July issue) was little more than an ill informed rant.

The councillors representing Ponteland are among the most hard working, committed, and

self effacing group of people that I have ever worked with.

They are hugely passionate in their desire and belief to make this community as good as it can be, and give freely of their time to achieve this, working closely with all of the other community groups in Ponteland to reach this objective.

To suggest that in any way they are motivated by pretension or self grandeur is so wide of the mark it is hardly worth comment, and is insulting to the individuals themselves and also to the residents who voted for their election (re-election in most cases).

If there is any pretension, I would argue that is in Mr Mannings' letter itself.

Ponteland has the critical mass of a town, and contributes significantly to the coffers of local government, with the demise of Castle Morpeth BC and the formation of the "single unitary council", town status was deemed to be tactically desirable, but in no way seeks to alter the unique village feel that Ponteland has in its centre.

So rather than sniping from a distance, by all means come down to the offices or a Parish meeting and find out what is going on.

*Coun Harry McKay
Medburn (Ponteland West)*

Park entrance cash would have been better spent on public toilets

The well-argued letters from Messrs. Sproul and Earp in the July issue concerning the park entrance make points which I know have also been raised by some of the nearly 100 people who have expressed their views either directly or through the Civic Society, the Friends of Ponteland Park or Ponteland Community Partnership

The Council has now succeeded in uniting these bodies in their opposition to the proposals.

Every comment from any of us seems to be brushed aside by smooth responses which do not stand up to scrutiny. Thus we are told that "the Main Street by its nature is of a formal character". Indeed? Grey Street in Newcastle is of a formal character because it was designed as such; Main Street in Ponteland is a grouping of largely vernacular buildings which have developed organically over very many years and cannot be so described.

We also learn that the proposals "will provide a welcoming and clear identification of the park and encourage a greater use of this facility". But surely the intended array of railings and 10-foot pillars is more likely to present an unwelcoming psychological barrier.

And if any visitor is tempted to stop and look around, a visit to Ponteland's outdated public toilets is likely to persuade him go on his way. The £22,000 that the entrance will apparently cost might have been better spent in that direction.

*Philip Ham
Chairman, Ponteland Civic Society.*

September deadlines

The September issue will be delivered the week beginning September 1. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday August 18. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the September issue.

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Update from



**Ponteland
Community
Partnership**

Three firms bidding for village centre revamp contract Residents to choose final design this autumn

By Joanne Luther

Ponteland Community Partnership is pleased to confirm that after considering a number of Expressions of Interest in conjunction with Castle Morpeth Borough Council, three companies have been chosen to go through to the Full Design and final stage of the Regeneration exercise.

The Regeneration Sub Group has unanimously decided to disguise the names of each developer with the help of CMBC to ensure that the final design is chosen by the PCP and the residents of Ponteland on its merit and close relationship with the Design Brief.

Each successful company has been deemed suitable to go to the next stage after close scrutiny by CMBC as to their relevant experience, past projects and financial acumen to be able to deliver such a project.

The Regeneration Sub Group will await full designs with a deadline of 30th September. It is expected that presentations will be made to residents of Ponteland at a number of public displays in early December.

It has always been the intention of the PCP to keep residents up to date with any news of the Regeneration of Merton Way

Shopping Centre. The timetable which was highlighted at the back of the Design Brief has been strictly adhered to and the final decision as to which design will be taken forward is still in the hands of the residents.

Details of the public displays will be included in the November issue of *Pont News & Views* and will also be available online via www.castlemorpeth.gov.uk and www.pontelandonline.co.uk



Lady bowlers on winning streak

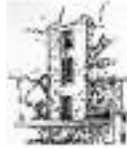
By Muriel Sobo

A team of bowlers from Ponteland have won the annual county knock-out tournament.

They played singles, pairs, triples and rinks against teams around the county and defeated Blyth in the final when they triumphed in a needle match.

Pictured are (left to right): Liz Emmerson, Di McDonnell, Jenifer Nixon, Elizabeth French, Margaret Cowan, June Nichol holding the trophy, Marina Catchpole, Lorna Telfer the team Captain, Nancy Cauldwell, Doreen Walwyn-James and Betty Nesbit.

Ponteland Town Council



NEWS



Pride in Ponteland

Presentation by Chairman to Alex Dobbing – student at Ponteland Community High School

Chairman Robin Ramsay presented a cheque for £100 and a certificate to Alex Dobbing, a student at Ponteland Community High School in respect of a contribution towards the Rotary Youth Leadership Second Mile Award for 2008. This is the first year that the Town Council have made this contribution and it will help cover the costs of Alex attending an activity week at the Allenmouth Centre between 4 and 9 August, the aim of which is to emphasise leadership, citizenship and personal growth. Alex gave a brief presentation to the Town Council on the sort of activities she would be participating in and what she hoped to gain from this course.

Programme of works report

The Town Council outlined a number of projects they wished to progress during the course of the coming year. Various councillors were identified to lead the projects and they were asked to report back on progress to date. Projects involved items such as the park entrance proposals, the new bus shelter on Main Street, park tree management, park slope stability investigations, new signage on the A696, a litter bin replacement programme, supply of water to the allotments at Prestwick and the provision of historical signs and walking routes. To date several projects have been completed including the provision of new rockeries on Main Street, refurbishment of the War Memorial and the provision of signage and re-surfacing works at the Callerton Lane Play Area.

Ponteland Town Council office move

It was reported that the Town Council would move to their new premises with effect from 30 July. The offices were located at Meadowfield Court, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Ponteland – opening hours would remain unchanged 9.30am – 12.30pm Monday to Friday. The move would be taking place in the week leading up to the 30 July.

New bus shelter – Main Street

It was reported that the new bus shelter would be installed on 15 July on Main Street. The shelter will be a welcome addition to the street scene and will replace the existing old brick built structure. The old shelter would be demolished after the new one had been installed.

Temporary closure of Kirkley West Thorn household waste recovery centre

The Council was most concerned to learn that the above waste recovery centre would be closed temporarily from Friday 18 July until the week commencing 15 September whilst improvements are carried out. The Council was concerned at the lack of publicity and lack of consultation on this important issue for residents. The nearest waste recovery centres were located at Prudhoe and Morpeth and there were fears that this could lead to an increase in flytipping. The Town Council resolved to write to Northumberland County Council requesting the introduction of some temporary measures including local recycling facilities for cardboard, local provision of emergency skips for household waste to be regularly emptied and removed and the

temporary suspension of bulk waste collection services.

Meeting with Police

The Town Council had requested a meeting with representatives of Northumbria Police. Councillors were asked to submit any items they wished to discuss to the Clerk within the next week. The date would be circulated to Councillors when a response had been received.

Enterprise Day – Ponteland Community High School

Town Councillors were thanked for their involvement in a series of events held at Ponteland Community High School during week commencing 7 July. Councillor Harry McKay had taken part in a 'Dragons Den' event on Tuesday 8 July. He along with the other three 'dragons' had been most impressed at the ideas put forward for consideration including, heated scarves, gloves etc and a household boiler that burned ordinary domestic waste. However, the winning team had the idea of a golf ball with GPRS technology – surely a must for all golfers. Other Town Councillors had attended a series of presentations held on Wednesday 9 July relating to the Ponteland skate park challenge. Again, Councillors were most impressed with the standard and content of the presentations. Councillors would also be attending the Global Village challenge to be held on Friday 11 July followed by an awards ceremony at 3pm.

This report is of the Town Council meeting held on July 10.

Council loses battle to stop sheltered complex on auction mart site

A retirement complex with 54 sheltered apartments is to be built on Ponteland's former auction mart site after a council planning decision was overruled by a Government inspector.

Castle Morpeth Borough Council had refused the application for

the over-55s accommodation by Golden Living Ltd last October on the basis the site was within the Meadowfield Industrial Estate and should be retained for employment use only.

But Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Inspector JDS Gillis

concluded that the appeal site "does not form part of the Industrial Estate and that the proposed development would not result in any demonstrable harm to the supply of employment land in Ponteland or the surrounding area".

Golden Living advertises on its

website that the development "will consist of a mixture of one and two bedroom private apartments and include a range of safety and security features including CCTV, 24-hour Careline and a resident estate manager."

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Young gardeners hope to win favour of In Bloom judges

Myles, Graham, Benjamin and Joseph were assigned as guides for the judges and explained the different projects on their way around. A credit to the school.

By Muriel Sobo

It just happened to be the last morning of term before the long summer holiday when Mrs K Clark and Mrs R Cookson came to Ponteland Middle School to judge the efforts of their eco-team for the Northumbria in Bloom competition.

We won't know what they thought till September but this experienced gardener was hugely impressed by the team's commitment and the work accomplished so far.

The inspiration behind the different gardens and the variety of designs is head gardener Martin Froggatt, also assistant head. But it is the enthusiasm of the boys and girls who discuss plans and carry out the many tasks that brings results.

A vegetable garden, enclosed by classrooms on all sides, is a revelation with many different fruit and veg ripening over the seasons in specially designed and constructed raised beds made by the children. Their broad bean pods were exceptional! Classes in food technology make the most of the fresh produce and carrot cake was mentioned. Surplus produce is frozen.

There were many plantings of shrubs and new trees in the grassed areas around the school and varieties of lavender in the borders to attract bees. The wildlife area looked like a summer meadow but a closer look revealed piles of old logs, bird and bat boxes, again made by the pupils and all surrounded by a newly planted privet hedge. Watch this space!

The finance for the project comes mainly by a donation from a horticultural company who hold an annual plant sale in the school car park. The school has measured its carbon footprint and the children are very aware of recycling and water use. They are already a Green Flag School but they hope to improve on their Silver Gilt award of last year.

Athol House sheltered accommodation was the next stop for the judges, where a beautiful, colourful garden well tended by the chief gardener Mary Short is a joy for the residents. Thea Morrison, her right hand woman, died earlier this year and is greatly missed. Mary has lived all her life in Ponteland, many years in Athol House, and is a valued member of the community.

New Exhibition Of Local Artists At The Gallery In Bonner & White



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Ponteland's only surviving Land Girl finally honoured

By Muriel Sobo

Ponteland's only surviving Land Girl Lilian Smith has at the age of 82 finally received her Badge of Honour.

It was posted by Government department Defra, along with about 30,000 others, to Land Girls and Lumber Jills from the days of the Second World War.

These girls were conscripted and belonged to a uniformed organisation which all governments in the 63 years since the end of the war have chosen to ignore.

But Lilian feels a sense of both joy and satisfaction at receiving the medal and proudly sports it along with her original Land Army badge.



ROTARY'S ANNUAL DUCK RACES

Sunday 7 September 1.30pm - 4pm Ponteland Park

By Rotarian Fred Sealey

A fun afternoon is promised for all the family with the annual duck races event at Ponteland Park.

As well as the races themselves, other attractions will include the bouncy castle, fairground organ, refreshments, and displays.

Race tickets are available from Opticians Mackley & Studdert in Main Street or any Rotarian.

All proceeds to deserving charities.

News in Brief

ROTARY CLUB OF PONTELAND OPERA GALA CONCERT

The Rotary Club of Ponteland will be holding their annual Opera Gala Concert with Graeme Danby and artistes from Covent Garden, Glyndebourne and English National Opera at the Britannia Hotel on Sunday 19th October. **Tickets are available from Mackley and Studdert (Optometrists), Main Street, Ponteland, Stewart Blair (01661 822367), Les Danby (01661 823219) or any member of the Rotary Club. Admission costs £10.**

NORTH EAST ENGLAND GROUP OF THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY

Welcome to our new season of gardening talks which starts on 8th September. Our first speaker is John Main who will give an illustrated talk called '100ft x 60ft' which is designed to whet your appetite for any Autumn changes to your garden. John Main is the retired Director of Horticulture at the Royal Botanic garden, Edinburgh, also curator of Harlow Car in Harrogate for five years and curator at Wisley in Surrey for eight years. 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 but we will not charge for your first visit. **Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 4132574.** I would also just like to give forward mention of our Autumn Show to be held on Saturday 11th October at the Memorial Hall, Ponteland.



James and Molly

win Ponteland's Young Musician of the Year Award

James and Molly receive their award from Ponteland Rotary Club President David Tanner.

By Geoff Brown

High school students Molly Roberts and James Pallister have been named as the 2007-08 Rotary Club of Ponteland Young Musicians of the Year.

For more than 20 years, Ponteland Rotarians have awarded a handsome glass trophy and gift voucher prize to the young musician who has made the most significant musical contribution to the school and the community.

"Usually we only have one winner," said Ponteland Community High School headteacher Stephen Prandle. "However, James and Molly have proven such talented and committed young musicians that it was decided they should share the award, and our congratulations go to them both."

Pianist Molly and guitarist James, both aged 18, performed a special recital for around 30 Rotary Club members before receiving their awards.

"This was a great way to end our school careers, performing to an appreciative audience without having to think about exam grades," said James.

Bob Crosby, Honorary Secretary of the Rotary Club of Ponteland, added: "It is our pleasure to reward such dedicated and gifted young people. The annual recitals,

when the winning musicians play for our members, are always a highlight of our calendar."

Club members were first inspired to honour local youngsters with outstanding musical talents after seeing the BBC's Young Musician of the Year competition. The first winner in 1987 was Catherine McGuire, who went on to Chethams School of Music and then to a symphony orchestra.

Molly's talents have won her a rare and coveted unconditional scholarship to fund tuition at the prestigious Guildford School of Acting Conservatoire. James is taking a year out to visit Mexico, where he has family, during which he will run a bar, before going to university to study Spanish.

Meek's monster machines start meadow project

By Coral Wilmot
Secretary, Friends of Ponteland Park



Local farmer Gordon Meek started the first phase of the Friends of Ponteland Park's Meadow creation project, the cutting and baling of the existing vegetation on the site.

The huge baler was manoeuvred around the site with consummate ease, as Gordon



pointed out with a wry smile 'somewhat smaller than the 25 acre field that he had been baling earlier'.

The job was completed in record time and now we can begin stage two of the project, the preparation of the ground ready to receive the wild flower seeds and plug plants.

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Tuesday 16th September - 7pm

A ten week course for beginners who want to learn the basics of salsa dancing. All ages welcome - come along and have some fun! Cost £50pp payable in advance.

BALLROOM DANCING CLASSES

Thursday 18th September - 7pm

A ten week course for beginners who want to learn ballroom dancing. All ages welcome - come along and have some fun! Cost £50pp payable in advance.

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Sunday 21st September - 12pm - 4pm

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Sunday 5th October - 3pm - 6pm

Ballroom dancing, tea and biscuits. All ages are welcome - come along and have some fun! £6pp

Booking is essential for all events. Book early to avoid disappointment.

We have lots more exciting events in October through to December including a Moroccan evening, murder mystery night, wine tasting, and Christmas festivities. Please call for more details.

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