

## **6. Description of Proposed Open Spaces.**

### **1. Ponteland Park**

The area of land known as Ponteland Park was acquired in stages by previous Administrations to provide the village of Ponteland with a convenient and pleasant area close to the centre where residents could walk and relax, and where regular civic or other events could be held. The River Pont meanders through the area, which is divided naturally into zones, such as grassland, arboretum and flower beds with metalled and natural pathways. Whilst the Park is maintained by the Town Council, the *Friends of Ponteland Park* perform a valuable voluntary service in planting trees, shrubs and bulbs, etc., and maintaining a wild flower meadow. Its importance to the residents cannot be over-estimated.

### **2. Coates Green.**

The area of land between Ponteland St. Mary's Church and Main Street was formerly the site of the "new" Coates School which came into use in 1875, having superseded the previous school which had become too small. Prior to that, the area had contained a Tithe Barn and a number of old cottages. The "new" school was in turn demolished in 1968 after a new and even larger school had been erected on Thornhill Road. The area of land so made vacant was subsequently cleared and grassed over with some trees and flower beds, so forming an attractive green space and considerably adding to the general amenity and value of the streetscape at this central road junction in Ponteland. It became known as Coates Green in deference to its previous use. From time-to-time, informal public gatherings take place on Coates Green, such as at Christmas and other Feast Days as well as at such traditional events as the 5<sup>th</sup> of November. In the latter case, firework displays originating from the car park behind the Rialto Restaurant can be safely observed.

### **3. The Green, Northumbria Police HQ.**

The "Cottage Homes" at Ponteland were created for homeless children in 1904 on a site which, after changing hands several times over the years, finally became the Northumbria Police Headquarters. The Police Site is now to be sold with outline planning permission for 273 dwellings, but the houses in which the children lived are classified as Grade II and will not be demolished. In order to provide a sense of community for the children, these houses had been grouped around an oval grassed area known as "The Green" which thereby provided a strongly cohesive element to the Homes. In order to preserve the essential nature and continuity of The Green, it is essential that it should remain with the old Cottage Homes around it. This will also have the advantage that it will provide a natural focus for the future development of the site. It will also, of course, serve as a pleasant relaxation area for adults and a safe area of play for children.

#### **4. Coates Institute Garden.**

In the early 1960s, a number of old shops adjacent to the Coates Institute were demolished in order to make way for a new building for Barclays Bank, which was thus able to vacate its former premises at 1, West Road. The new Bank was set well back from the road and a small area of land was made available for a garden adjacent to the former Institute which, by that time, had become the offices for an estate agency. The garden itself is, in contrast to Coates Green, a small and intimate area with a few seats where people may watch the world go by. It, too, adds to the streetscape and helps to ensure that, in spite of the sometimes heavy traffic, Ponteland has the character of a village where one is never far from a green space.