

SUMMER 2009

# Ashford <sup>voice</sup>

NEWS • LIFE • INFO

## Honoured

Meet our local Territorial  
Army heroes



### INSIDE...

- High speed this summer
- Kingsnorth's thriving
- Ashford boom
- Readers' survey - win £100



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# Welcome <sup>voice</sup> Ashford

Welcome back to Ashford Voice, your borough magazine delivered straight to your doorstep. It's full of features on living, working and enjoying life in Ashford and the surrounding communities.

In this summer issue, discover how local people are being helped to stay in their villages thanks to projects to provide affordable rural homes. Plus, find out more about the village of Kingsnorth in **Your Community**.

Now more than ever the Territorial Army is an essential part of the British Army. Ashford Voice meets the local heroes at Ashford's very own TA unit recently given the borough's highest honour – the Freedom of the Borough.

Find out how to keep your business on track as we discover how it's more boom than doom and gloom for Ashford's businesses.

This edition we have swapped our "A day in the life of..." regular feature for an article about the councillors responsible for making key Ashford Borough Council decisions, so read on and "Meet the Executive".

Whether it's theatre, music, days out or that quintessential English event – the village fete, our "What's on" section has something for everyone this summer.

In the next edition **Your Community** will be featuring **Willesborough**, so if you're a resident of this area, please get in touch and let us know about living, working and playing in this part of the borough.

We hope you enjoy reading this magazine and if you have any comments or suggestions for articles or features about life in our borough, please keep your letters and emails coming in. Remember, Ashford Voice is your voice.



If you would like a copy of Ashford Voice in large print or audio format please ring **01233 330209** or visit [www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk)

Did you know you can read your borough magazine online? Go to [www.ashford.gov.uk/voice](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/voice) to read Ashford Voice via PageSuite.

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## News in brief

# 37 Minutes to London from the summer



High speed domestic rail services linking Ashford with St Pancras International in just 37 minutes are likely to start early with a preview service launching this summer.

Reports suggest that three Ashford to St Pancras services will run in the morning peak and three return services in the evening peak.

The service will launch in full in December meaning eight extra trains a day to and from London at peak times (between 7am and 10am and 4pm and 7pm).

For more information visit [www.southeasternrailway.co.uk](http://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk).

### Learn more about how Ashford is evolving into a vibrant and exciting place to live and work

The team behind the town's major regeneration developments are holding information days on Thursday 18 June, Friday 19 June and Saturday 20th June from 9am to 6pm.

Come along to the exhibition area in County Square and see the Ashford model and the film, Opportunity Ashford, which bring future plans to life and convey a real sense of how the town is developing.

Representatives from Ashford's Future and Ashford Borough Council will be on hand to explain the plans for the town, and there will also be information for visitors to take away.

For more information visit [www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk](http://www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk).

## Funding boost for Victoria Way

Victoria Way, a proposed new route linking the International Station and Brookfield Road by Matalan has been successful in gaining £16.5m in Government funding.

The new Victoria Way will play a key part in the transformation of the town centre by allowing it to grow and thrive.

A planning application is expected during the summer.

For more information on Victoria Way visit [www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk](http://www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk).



## Ashford really is best placed

Ashford's residents are happy with where they live and feel safe according to draft results of this year's Place Survey.

Over 84% of residents are satisfied or very satisfied with the area as a place to live and place the borough the best in Kent for perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

The results also place Ashford in the top third in Kent for 11 out of 18 other key issues.

All local authorities are required to carry out the new 'Place Survey' which replaces the former Best Value User Satisfaction Survey, last carried out by Ashford Borough Council in 2006.

For more information visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/placesurvey](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/placesurvey).

## Julie Rose Stadium remains open



The uncertainty over the future of the Julie Rose Stadium is over.

Funding issues had threatened to close the stadium but this has now been resolved and the stadium remains open.

Ashford Borough Council has taken over responsibility for the operation of the Julie Rose Stadium and appointed Ashford Leisure Trust to continue its day to day management.

For more information on the Julie Rose Stadium visit [www.julierosestadium.co.uk](http://www.julierosestadium.co.uk).

## Healthy eating on the menu

A healthy eating menu competition was just one of the features of this year's local Youth Conference where more than 80 young people from schools and colleges across the borough took part in a range of workshops and activities on healthy living.

Daisy Carter, 12, from Ashford School designed the winning healthy menu which was cooked for her by Jean Claude Macfarlane, Head Chef at Ashford International Hotel. It has also been published in a booklet along with over 20 other entries.

For more information about this year's conference and the healthy eating menus visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/youth](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/youth).



## New role for council chief executive

Ashford Borough Council's Chief Executive, David Hill, will be leaving the council to take up the role of Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Council. He is due to leave Ashford in July after seven years as Chief Executive.



"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at Ashford Borough Council, working with such a committed team of people", said David Hill.

## Photo competition captures town's best features



If you could capture an image of what 'Ashford Best Placed in Britain' means to you in a photograph – what would it be?

This was the challenge thrown down to the people of Ashford and further afield in a competition that saw 90 photos uploaded to the Ashford Best Placed website.

15 of the best entries were shortlisted for a public vote for the winners on line or via text message.

All photos can be viewed at [www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk](http://www.ashfordbestplaced.co.uk) and an exhibition of the 15 finalists is being held in County Square on Saturday 13 June.



# Local homes for local people

**How affordable rural homes are helping people live in their home village.**

**W**hen Tom Wratten was handed keys to his brand new house in Smeeth, it was the end of a very long wait to come home.

The 42-year-old was born in the village and had always dreamed of having a home of his own there, but steep market prices meant he had no choice but to move away. But now, thanks to a new development of rural affordable housing, Mr Wratten and his partner Michelle Wilmshurst can now call the picturesque village their home.

Mr Wratten said, ***"I was born in Smeeth, and my parents still live here. I always wanted to come back after I moved away, but felt I could not afford it. This project has been brilliant for us; it keeps younger people in the village and supports local services. We are delighted."***



Tom Wratten and partner Michelle Wilmshurst outside their new home.

Affordable rural homes are now a realistic option for local people struggling to get onto the property ladder and Ashford is one of the best places in the country for getting them right.

Ashford Borough Council works with a number of housing association partners to provide affordable homes in the borough, including outlying villages and rural communities. Designed with the interests of the local community in mind, the rural developments are intended for people with a connection to the area - perhaps through family or work – who are unable to afford market prices.



Homes are constructed using local labour and suppliers where possible, and the local parish council is involved at all stages to ensure developments are in keeping with the surrounding area.

In March, eleven new houses and apartments were unveiled in

Fortescue Place in Smeeth (named after the late parish councillor Gordon Fortescue who worked tirelessly on the scheme). Eight homes are rented with three shared-ownership were tenants can purchase a maximum of 80 per cent of the property.



Tom Wratten receives the key to his new home from Mrs May Fortescue wife of the late Gordon Fortescue.

Key to success of each scheme is ensuring those who ultimately live in the homes have a vested interest in keeping their community alive.

Mr Wratten added, *“My partner and I are training to be community first responders (trained to respond to 999 medical calls while waiting for the ambulance) for the people of Smeeth. We are glad that we can offer something back to the community after it has given us so much.”*

Ashford Borough Council has built a total of 93 rural affordable homes, with 38 more planned for Rolvenden, Smarden, Charing and Old Wives Lees, with the possibility of more at Egerton and Godmersham and Crundale.



English Rural Housing Association  
chief executive  
Adrian Maunder

*Ashford is a particularly good example of best practice when it comes to rural affordable housing.*

*I regularly quote the achievements of the borough to demonstrate what can be done when the borough and parish council's provide such effective leadership for their local communities.*



Under current planning policy, 30 per cent of all new housing developments of 15 units or more (35 per cent in rural areas) must be 'affordable' for people unable to afford market prices.

Affordable 'local needs' homes in rural areas enable local people to remain in the village where they live or work, and not be forced to move away because of high house prices and rents.

They are provided on sites where general housing would not normally be acceptable and occupation is legally restricted.

For more information about affordable rural homes visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing) or call 01233 330688.



## Key facts

**Commerce:** Part-time Post Office (9am – 12.30pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday), garage. Major supermarket, petrol station, estate agent, hairdressers, and dry cleaners (Park Farm).

**Services/facilities:** St Michael & All Angels Church, village hall, doctors surgery, vets.

**Schools:** Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School.

**Recreation/clubs:** Scout and Guides, Kingsnorth WI, fencing club, folk dancing, line dancing, senior citizens club, youth drama group, gardening club.

**Pub:** The Queens Head.

**Village Halls:** Kingsnorth Village Hall.

**Parish Clerk:** Parish Clerk: Mrs D Alsop.

**Telephone:** 01233 660947 **Email:** clerk@kingsnorthparishcouncil.gov.uk.

**Parish Council** meetings are usually held at 7.30pm in the Sports Pavilion on the last Thursday in each month.

### Councillor's details:

#### WEALD SOUTH:



Cllr. Paul Bartlett, Imber, Cheeseman's Green Lane, Sevington, Ashford, Kent TN24 0LJ. **Telephone:** 01233 500667 **Email:** paulbartlett@ransleygreyhounds.com

*“Kingsnorth is a vibrant village with a real sense of community which aims to continue to preserve its heritage while welcoming new residents and opportunities to enrich what is already a great place to live.”*

## Your community: Kingsnorth life



**K**ingsnorth village is a thriving community which has managed to keep its heart and soul over the years.

The Domesday Book shows there was a settlement in 1086 but there's evidence people were living in the area centuries before including Roman remains in the foundations of the local church.

The heart of the village is now a conservation area and includes a number of picturesque old houses and the linchpins of village life, the church, primary school and village hall which along with local people's great sense of community helps ensure the village goes from strength to strength.



Local resident Lisa Chapman explains their importance to her family. "I've lived in the village for 18

years. I got married to my husband James in the church, sent my two eldest children to the primary school and my youngest now goes to the nursery in the village hall. I love the friendliness and sense of community and would never want to live anywhere else."

### Church

The Kent ragstone late Norman Church of St. Michael and All Angels plays an active role in village life.

Canon Sheila McLachlan, Rector and Area Dean explains, "We have a thriving local church and continue to build on the

village's rich history of community. The meeting rooms in the new extension and the flexibility of the reordering of the church means we can provide even more for local people.



"We offer lunch clubs, a youth drama club, drop-in clinic for Citizens Advice and

the local Community Warden and after school clubs for parents and toddlers to name just a few."

The church welcomes new members to its two choirs or you could think about joining the bell ringers.

### Village Hall

The village hall is home to dozens of clubs and activities. The place has a real buzz. There's always something going on, no matter what the time of day. There's a part-time post office, the local nursery and even a club where you can learn how to fence (with swords that is). And with a great recreation ground, sports pavilion and play area behind there's something for all ages and interests.



### School

The original Victorian building remains but the village school is vibrant and forward thinking with a six year old annexe providing a modern learning environment.

School governor Julian Sheehan's two daughters love the school. He says, "It's a fantastic, friendly place with a great ethos and sense of community. The Parent and Friends Association runs events throughout the year including the annual fireworks display and summer fair.

"The great thing about Kingsnorth is how well integrated the community is. You have the church, school and village hall supporting each other's events and offering facilities to each other. Parents chat as they drop off or pick up their children, pop into the post office in the village hall find out what's going on then they and their children join local groups and clubs and village life keeps going."

**If there's a part of the borough you'd like to see featured in Ashford Voice please let us know by email: [voice@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:voice@ashford.gov.uk)**

## Contact details

Clubs and societies: [www.kingsnorthparishcouncil.gov.uk/associations](http://www.kingsnorthparishcouncil.gov.uk/associations)

St Michael & All Angels Church: **01233 620433**

Kingsnorth Bell Ringers: **01233 502721**

Village Hall: **01233 634557**

Doctor's Surgery: **01233 610140**

Vets: **01233 640022**

Post Office: **01233 620579**

Forge Garage: **01233 625365**

Yellow Elephant Nursery: **07921 927780**

Kingsnorth C of E School: **01233 622673**

KCC Community Warden: **07773 396646**

Kingsnorth WI: Meet every 1st week of the month at 10am at the Queens Head Pub



# Meet the Executive

We find out more about the men responsible for most day to day Ashford Borough Council decisions.

In 2001 Ashford Borough Council modernised and streamlined the way it was run. Now most decisions are made by the Executive comprising seven councillors elected by the Full Council.

The Executive is made up of the Council Leader and six Executive Members and provides leadership at the top level of the council, driving forward the council's priorities, and also provides leadership within local partnerships. The Executive and Full

Council meet once a month, dates of forthcoming meetings can be found on page 22 of Ashford Voice.

The Executive Members are known as Portfolio Holders and they are each responsible for specific service areas across the council.

For contact details and further information about the Executive and other borough councillors visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/councillors).



## Leader of Ashford Borough Council

WARD: TENTERDEN WEST



Cllr Paul Clokie has been Leader for the past ten years. He moved to Tenterden in 1995 after a successful career in IT and was elected to Ashford Borough Council in 1997 becoming Leader two years later.

Cllr Clokie has 35 years experience in local government and was previously a member of Leeds City Council and the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames where he was also Leader.

Cllr Clokie explains what made him become a councillor and why 35 years later he's still so enthusiastic. "As a young man I had strong opinions and decided to be constructive and do something about issues I felt strongly about," he says. "It's

very rewarding when you can make a difference to an area and influence the quality of people's lives and it's a very exciting time to be a councillor in Ashford. There are so many aspects to the town's growth it's fascinating to be a part of the process," he added.

What doesn't he like about local government? "Over the years the amount of red tape we have to wade through has meant it takes longer to get from idea or policy to a tangible result."

Cllr Clokie was awarded an OBE in 2007 for services to local government. He is widowed with two children, two step-children and a granddaughter.

## Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Resource Management & Control

WARD: WEALD EAST

**Cllr Paul Bartlett** joined the council in 1999. He has lived in Mersham since 1976 and works in London as a chartered accountant for a property investment company.

Cllr Bartlett is responsible for council finances and deputises

for the Leader. He is particularly interested in transport issues and proud of Ashford's track record of having the lowest Council Tax in Kent.

Cllr Bartlett is married.



## Portfolio Holder – Environmental Services and IT

WARD: BIDDENDEN



**Cllr Neil Bell** has represented Biddenden since 1995.

After several successful years with IBM in the UK and the US Cllr Bell now runs his own IT business.

Cllr Bell has served on the Council's Executive since it was introduced successfully delivering the £200m Stanhope PFI

regeneration project and the council's Blue Box recycling scheme. Previously he was also responsible for leisure services. He strongly supports keeping the Council Tax down and trying to get recycling rates up.

He enjoys helping local communities and providing solutions to issues. He hates red tape and jargon. He is married with three children.

## Portfolio Holder – Cultural Services

WARD: CHARING

**Cllr Gerry Clarkson** moved to Charing 16 years ago after 30 years in the London fire service where he rose through the ranks to be Chief Fire Officer. He also served as Chief Executive Officer for the London Fire & Civil Defence Authority.

Cllr Clarkson's responsibilities include leisure, the arts, and sports. He has served for eight years as a member of the Kent

Police Authority and sits on many external bodies. He was awarded the CBE in 1990 and is a Freeman of the City of London. Married for the last 48 years to Rose, he has two grown up children and eight grandchildren.



## Portfolio Holder – Communications, Parking and Licensing

WARD: BOCKHANGER



**Cllr Michael Cloughton** was first elected to the council in 1989 serving for 14 years and was Mayor in his final year. He returned to the council in 2007.

His responsibilities cover a range of services from parking, licensing and communications to community safety,

customer services and the voluntary and community sector.

He is involved with a number of local charities and voluntary organisations and particularly enjoys sport especially cricket as a former player and now umpire.

He is married with one son.

## Portfolio Holder – Development, Partnerships and Personnel

WARD: KENNINGTON

**Cllr John Kemp** was elected to the council in 1988. He moved to Kennington after a successful career in the Royal Mechanical and Electrical Engineers where he rose to the rank of Major.

After leaving the regular army he served a further ten years with the Territorial Army and was awarded an MBE in 1987.

Cllr Kemp's responsibilities include planning and development

and he represents the council on a number of external bodies including the Ashford Older People Welfare Committee, South East England Regional Assembly, South East Employers and the South East England War Pensions Committee.

Cllr Kemp is a widower with two children and five grandchildren.



## Portfolio Holder – Housing, Property and Corporate Governance

WARD: SAXON SHORE



**Cllr Peter Wood** joined the council in 2003. A retired Chartered Accountant and Management Consultant, he has lived in Aldington for 27 years.

Cllr Wood is responsible for the council's housing service including housing strategy, social housing

and homelessness along with responsibilities for managing the council's assets and internal audit.

He has championed many local rural causes and is also a parish councillor.

# Heroes all

This year, Ashford Borough Council presented the highest honour it can give - The Freedom of the Borough - to our local Territorial Army corps.

Ashford Voice went to the Territorial Army Centre in Ashford to find out more about 133 Field Company of the 103 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME).

Ashford born and bred Officer Commanding Major Tony Finch joined REME in 1976 working his way up from new recruit to the top job and is proud of the men and women under his command and the Corps' longstanding links with the town.



*"REME has had connections with the town since 1942. I started out as a civilian apprentice vehicle mechanic when this site was the civilian REME workshops which had been one of the biggest employers in the town."*

*"The workshops may have gone but over the years hundreds of people from our Borough and further a field have served as Territorials here in Ashford. Most had full or part time jobs, training in their spare time, prepared to support the regular army when called to do so."*

*"We've sent people to Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan and the bulk of the unit was mobilised in 2003. But since then we have an annual commitment to provide a number of soldiers for operations. We currently have two serving in Afghanistan and two recently returned from Cyprus and Kenya."*

*"They're a fantastic bunch of people and I'm very proud of them."*

Major Finch works full time for Kent County Council.

The Army depends on its vehicles and equipment. REME provides a wide range of engineering skills and expertise including repairing vehicles and

equipment, recovery support, welders and the repair and maintenance of weapons systems. As well as technical and mechanical people, their chefs, stores people, radio operators and clerical staff are equally important.



Training with the TA involves both military skills and trade training and, once trained, Territorials have the opportunity to help provide vital support, working alongside regular soldiers.

The benefits of becoming a Territorial are many, from gaining qualifications and transferable skills, the opportunity to travel and much more. Territorials also receive pay.



Ashford father-of-two Gavin Barlow spent seven years with the REME cadets, before joining the adult corps as a craftsman (vehicle mechanic).

The 25 year olds' day job of restoring tanks for a company in Great Chart is a

direct benefit of joining the unit. He says, ***"Before, I was working in the building trade in London but training as a mechanic with REME made me the perfect person for the job."***

***"I recently spent four weeks at one of our workshops in Belize – I would never have been able to go somewhere like that without REME."***



Armourer Corporal James de Ville, agrees about the rewards that service with the TA can bring.

The 31-year-old engineering teacher first joined the REME eight years ago to learn about working with weapons, to assist his former career in television special effects.

He went on to serve in Iraq and was awarded a GOC (General Officer Commanding) commendation for outstanding service under fire.

***"You learn far more than military skills which you can use in your working life. Every year, there are more opportunities to do things that I never thought I would get the chance to do in my life."***



One of the newest recruits is 17 year old Emily Healey. Becoming a Territorial is in her blood, big brother Phil is also in the unit as was their Dad.

She says training to be a vehicle

mechanic is a far cry from her day job at Tesco Express. She says,

***"I've made a commitment to REME for three years and enjoy the people and the opportunity to learn skills which could well give me an alternative career, I might even join the regular Army."***

Major Finch added, ***"As well as training and working hard we also have a lot of fun and enjoy working on community projects and raising money for local charities."***

***"We've got people from all sorts of backgrounds with wide ranging day***

***jobs and there's a good age range too. It means you get to know lots of people and learn from their experiences."***

***"If you want to develop skills, have great opportunities, work in a fantastic team and make friends for life then come and join us."***

The Freedom of the Borough is the oldest and highest civic honour that can be bestowed on military organisations and individuals.

The ancient tradition allows an Army corps to hold a ceremonial march through the town with drums beating, colours flying and bayonets fixed.

Ashford Borough Council first awarded the Freedom of the Borough in 1979 to the Officers and Men of the Intelligence Corps. The most recent recipient was Ernest Mexter, who was the council's chief executive for 18 years.

The 133 Field Company (REME) was awarded the honour in May.



## Factfile

- The Territorial Army (TA) is the volunteer reserve force of the British Army made up mostly of part-time soldiers
- People volunteer from every walk of life from supermarket workers to city financiers
- There are currently more than 40,000 members of the TA, making up a quarter of the total strength of the British Army
- Territorials are regularly mobilised around the world to operations including Iraq and Afghanistan
- TA volunteers must be a citizen of the UK, Commonwealth or Republic of Ireland, aged between 17 and 42, must be prepared to get fit and take a medical and need no academic qualifications.



For information about joining call **01233 645161** or email **103REME-133-PSAO@mod.uk**



# Park life

**If you're looking for a free day out this summer check out a local park or village green.**

**T**he borough has hundreds of fantastic open spaces from public parks and gardens, river walks, woods and meadows to village greens and its very own area of outstanding natural beauty – the Wye Downs.

## Town

Take a walk on the wild side in the centre of town with the network of parks and walks that make up Ashford's Green Corridor. Linking Watercress Field, Victoria Park, Bowen's Field North and South Parks and Queen Mother's Park and other green spaces alongside the rivers that flow through Ashford with parts designated as local nature reserves.

The town's largest park, Victoria Park covers 16 acres. With a mix of formal gardens, open grass, trees, new children's play area and multi-purpose sports courts – you could easily stay all day. Take a picnic and if it's hot you could always dip your toes in the historic Hubert Fountain.

If you work in town and want some fresh air pop into the Memorial Gardens or walk down to North Park and South Parks by the Civic Centre or Queen Mother's Park. Laze on the grass, throw a frisbee with friends or take a stroll along the river.



Ashford Borough Council...

- manages eight town centre parks and open spaces: **Victoria Park, Bowen's Field, Queen Mother's Park, North Park, South Park, Vicarage Field and the Memorial Gardens, Watercress Fields.**
- spends around £725,000 maintaining parks and open spaces each year.
- looks after 48 equipped children's play areas.

## Take a trip through Ashford's green corridor



### And country

The borough's villages are home to dozens of idyllic village greens, open spaces and children's play areas run by parish councils. Visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/townsandvillages](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/townsandvillages) to find a village and see what's on offer.

If you're feeling more adventurous visit the Wye Downs - an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty right on your doorstep. With amazing views across the countryside there are walks for everyone from a simple stroll not far from a car park to robust rambles for the more experienced (and fit!).



If you're looking for a woodland adventure take a trip to the ancient woodland of Kings Wood, Challock home to Stour Valley Arts. Discover arts installations as you stroll through the woodland.

For more information visit  
[www.ashford.gov.uk/parksandopenspaces](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/parksandopenspaces)  
[www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk](http://www.ashfordgreencorridor.org.uk)  
[www.stourvalleyarts.org.uk](http://www.stourvalleyarts.org.uk)  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

## Summer sights and summer sounds – dates for the diary



Ashford Summer Sounds, now in its fifth successful year, is the month long community festival of music and fun starting with Ashford Jazz Festival on 1 July and ending with Create music festival on 26 July. Here's just a taste of some of the Summer Sounds and other events on offer in our parks and openspaces.

11 – 14 June  
 14 June  
 1 – 4 July  
 11 July  
 18 – 19 July  
 23 – 26 July  
 25 July  
 26 July

Funfair Victoria Park  
 Great Kent Bike Ride, Start & finish at North Park  
 Ashford Jazz Festival, Ashford town centre  
 Ashford Folk Day, Ashford town centre  
 Ashford Festival in the Park, North Park, Ashford  
 Funfair, Victoria Park  
 Summer Fun Day, Ashford Town Centre  
 Create, Victoria Park

For more information on Summer Sounds visit [www.ashfordpresents.co.uk](http://www.ashfordpresents.co.uk).

For more summer events check out What's On pages 18 and 19 of Ashford Voice or visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/events](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/events).

# Business focus

## Doom and gloom or boom town?

**The news may be dominated by stories of companies going bust and people losing their jobs due to the credit crunch. But how is Ashford faring?**

**Ashford Voice speaks to local experts and businesses to find out how the recession is affecting them and what they are doing to survive.**

### Confidence in Ashford

Business leaders say confidence in Ashford remains high despite the recession.

Ashford's ability to continue to attract major investment is helping to keep the town's ambitious growth plans firmly on track according to Jo James, Chief Executive of Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.

Retail giant Waitrose has confirmed it will open its first supermarket in the town later this year, creating 140 jobs and international medical device manufacturer Smiths Medical is moving from Hythe to Eureka Park (right).



**"Ashford is extremely well-placed to weather the recession and we hope will maintain a healthy trading climate."**

**"Businesses in the Ashford area have already shown that they have the entrepreneurship and ability to take advantage of any opportunities offered and many companies are diversifying and looking at new markets."**

**offered and many companies are diversifying and looking at new markets."**

### Ride out the storm

**"While we should not be over-optimistic, and may suffer some slow-down in the future, I believe that Ashford should be able to ride out this storm,"** says Jo.

## Streamline your operations

Local firms Kent Business Marketing Supplies and Enigma have diversified and found new markets.



Daryl Carter explains, **"We have had to adapt to stay competitive and stay ahead. Our retail business, China Place in the Designer Outlet was affected by reduced footfall. So we streamlined our operations and increased promotion. We also**

**expanded our promotional gifts business by merging with another company."**

Matthew Hunt, Director of Enigma agrees, **"We specialise in car key programming and car radio decoding but diversified into key diagnostics gradually growing the business from small premises to a 6,000sq ft building. Advice and support from the Chamber of Commerce has been very helpful."**

## Construction still moving forward

Local construction consultancy Woodley Coles LLP is another company surviving troubled times.



**"The construction industry has taken a hit with fewer houses being built, but the commercial sector is still holding strong in Ashford."**

**The new offices at Eureka Park are a good sign of construction still moving forward,"** says Partner Nigel Woodley.



**"We have private sector work drying up but a sustained amount of work coming through from the public sector, such as building health centres and schools, for example we were involved in the John Wesley School in south Ashford."**



## Adding value

Sunray Engineering design and manufacture security doors. Recent winners of the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year award for an impressive second year running, they're another business going from strength to strength.

General Manager David Evans says the secret of their success is adding value to their customers. "In the last three years through reacting to customer need, investment in plant and setting up our installations department we have been able to achieve 25% growth which has resulted in doubling our locally based workforce to 42 people with all the benefits that brings to the local economy."



## Help is out there

There's plenty of help and advice for businesses looking to rationalise, diversify or expand and on how to survive the slump.

### Business Link Kent

Business Link Kent is a great place for local businesses looking for help. They can offer advice and put companies in touch with the help they need on a wide range of issues from finding cost savings, helping with finance issues, planning for the future, finding alternatives to redundancies, and help in dealing with staff restructuring and major change.

For more information visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk), call 0845 600 9 006 or email [info@businesslinkkent.co.uk](mailto:info@businesslinkkent.co.uk).

### Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce

Their Business Support Team, sponsored by Ashford Borough Council, provide a free 'one to one' advisory service for any business based in the borough including pre-start advice, business planning guidance, cashflow forecasts and general support for established businesses.



To book a free and confidential business advisory session with an accredited business advisor call **01233 503838**.

To view the full range of services available through the Chamber visit [www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk](http://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk).

### Real Help

New government-backed website [www.realhelpnow.gov.uk](http://www.realhelpnow.gov.uk) promotes a range of help including seminars and training days, support with business finances, business diagnostic tools and information about investing in the future.

### Ashford Borough Council

You can also contact Ashford Borough Council's Economic Development Team for impartial and confidential advice. Call **01233 330310**, email [economicdevelopment@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@ashford.gov.uk) or visit the business section of the council's website [www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk).

# What's on

## If you go down to the woods today... you're in for a lot of fun

Ashford Go4Play is back with a series of fun-filled playdays youngsters won't want to miss.

Sessions will be running in June and July for children and young people up to 16 years with playdays held in beautiful public woodland across the borough.

And don't miss the fantastic Family Play Festival at the Singleton Environment Centre on Wednesday 5 August.



For more information call 01233 632957 or visit [www.kcfn.co.uk](http://www.kcfn.co.uk).



## Woodland Open Day

Saturday 6 June

Working horses, birds of prey, BBQ, homemade cakes, plants, pottery, coppice crafts, face painting and much more at Poulton Wood Nature Reserve, Forge Hill, Aldington.

Email [poultonwood@c-o-t.org.uk](mailto:poultonwood@c-o-t.org.uk) or call 01233 720163.

## SUMMER FUN ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS...

The Active Leisure Time Academy is an Ofsted registered play scheme crammed full of games, creative arts and crafts, sports, treasure hunts and theme days. The academy will be taking place at the Stour Centre or the Julie Rose Stadium and runs am/pm and all-day sessions.

For more information visit [www.thestourcentre.co.uk](http://www.thestourcentre.co.uk).

## Tentertainment is back...

Saturday 13 June and Sunday 14 June

This unique mix of great live music, great food, crafts, fun and entertainment for everyone is back bigger and better so make a date to go along and enjoy the fun at the Recreation Ground.

## Pig out at Egerton Summer Fete

Saturday 4 July  
Recreation Ground & Millennium Hall

Fun for all the family with a hog roast lunch, arena events, a parade through the village, dog show, tug of war, children's fancy dress competition and much more.

Call 01233 756601 for a programme.



## Singleton Environment Centre Wesley School Road Singleton

### Cool Jazz and Hot Food...

Music Nights at Footprints Cafe & Bistro - four course dinner and live music

Saturday 6 June - T.V.3 the Tim Vinyl Trio  
Saturday 13 June - Jazz Notes  
Saturday 14 July - Colin Welch Trio

7.30pm - 11pm

## Small Hythe Place, Tenterden

As You Like It - The Summer Outdoor Theatre Company

Thursday 23 - Sunday 26 July,  
7pm - 9.30pm.

Rapunzel and the Tower of Doom - A Barn Theatre Production

Thursday 30 July, 2pm - 3pm

A family show with puppets, props and music performed by Theatre of Widdershins.

To book call 0844 2491895 for more events visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk).

## Summer Fun at the Rare Breeds Centre

Friendly farm animals, piggy racing, birds of prey and so much more at the Rare Breeds Centre, Woodchurch this summer.

Call 01233 861493 or visit [www.rarebreeds.org.uk](http://www.rarebreeds.org.uk).



## Seeing stars!

Saturday 18 July

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy so how about stargazing with the Ashford Astronomical Society. Learn about the stars, planets and much more. They meet on the last Friday of each month at Woodchurch Memorial Hall, Woodchurch.



For more information visit [www.ashfordastro.org.uk](http://www.ashfordastro.org.uk).

Find out more about other local events on [www.ashford.gov.uk/events](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/events)

Local artists throw their doors open to the public as part of the South East Open Studios season. Between **5 and 21 June** you can get up close and personal with local artists in their studios and talk to them about their work. Find out more at [www.seos-art.org](http://www.seos-art.org).



## Stone cum Ebony Fete and Flower Show

**Saturday 18 July**

A quintessential village fete with old fashioned games, races, local crafts and home grown produce and scrumptious food. Held on the cricket field from 2pm with all proceeds going to local groups and projects. For more information call **01233 758106**.



## Equator – a celebration of world music, dance and theatre

**Philharmonia Tango and Shivanova**  
A fusion of cultures featuring tango and samba with Indian music and dance.

**Saturday 20 June, 7.30pm**  
**Brake Hall, Ashford School, Ashford**

Tickets: £10 with further discounts for concessions and families.

### Equator Choir Competition for Kent

Concert featuring the ten shortlisted choirs.

**Thursday 2 July, 7pm**  
**Brake Hall, Ashford School, Ashford**

Tickets: £10 with further discounts for concessions and families.

### Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies

One of Britain's top attractions on the folk/acoustic/Celtic circuit.

**Friday 10 July, 8pm**  
**Norton Knatchbull School Ashford**

Tickets: £10 with further discounts for concessions and families.

Visit [www.shivanova.com](http://www.shivanova.com) for more information.

## Sinden Theatre, Tenterden

**70s Party Night with Blondie!**  
**Saturday 6 June, 8pm**  
Tickets: £12

**Shades of Rock – Just Floyd & Purple**  
**Saturday 25 July, 7pm**  
Tickets: £12

Tickets for all shows available from [www.sindentheatre.biz](http://www.sindentheatre.biz).

## Tenterden Tapestry Reunion

**Saturday 13 June, 2pm–4.30pm**

It's 25 years since 220 Tenterden junior school children created the Tenterden Tapestry, one of the first items to be installed in Tenterden Museum. To celebrate the museum is holding a reunion. So if you are one of the 'children' make a date in your diary to go along and catch up on old times with former school chums.

For more information visit [www.tenterdenmuseum.i12.com](http://www.tenterdenmuseum.i12.com).

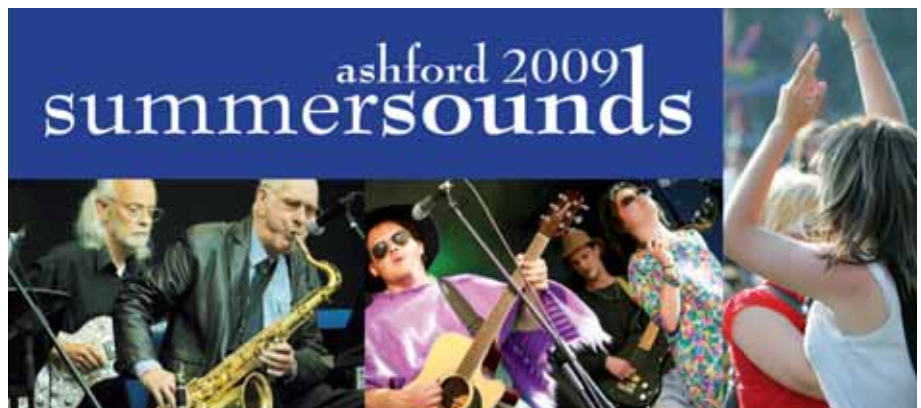


## The Great Kent Bike Ride

**Sunday 14 June**

Get on your bikes and explore local countryside with a 35 or 60 mile ride starting and finishing in Ashford's North Park next to the Civic Centre. The event is part of Bike Week the UK's largest mass participation cycling event which runs from 13–21 June.

To find out more visit [www.bikeweek.org.uk](http://www.bikeweek.org.uk).



Ashford Summer Sounds, now in its fifth successful year, is a month long community festival delivered by local people – for local people!

With jazz, folk, choral and world music there's something for everyone.

The month's events close with the Create Music Festival, the borough's top free summer festival now in its 13th year. Showcasing the best local music talent over three stages – this year's headline act Counterfeit Quo are the world's finest tribute to Status Quo and are set to bring the house down.

Summer Sounds highlights include:

- |              |                             |         |                             |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| 1 – 4 July   | Ashford Jazz Festival       | 18 July | Involve 2009 Youth Festival |
| 4 July       | Wye Nature Reserve Festival | 25 July | Summer Fun Day              |
| 9 July       | Sing Up                     | 26 July | Create Music Festival       |
| 11 July      | Ashford Folk Day            |         |                             |
| 18 & 19 July | Festival in the Park        |         |                             |

For locations and further details visit [www.ashfordpresents.co.uk](http://www.ashfordpresents.co.uk)



# Your council

## Calling all local clubs and groups

Promote your organisation for free on Ashford Borough Council's website.

A new groups and clubs directory is open to all non-profit making voluntary and community organisations operating in the borough.

It's a great way for groups to promote themselves and for the public to find out what's available in their area.

It doesn't matter if you are a youth, sports, arts, health and welfare or special interest group, the only requirement is that you are a non-profit making organisation operating in Ashford borough and that you have an email address. It couldn't be easier to add your group's details - just log on to the directory and follow the on-screen instructions.

So don't delay - enter your organisation's details today and start promoting your activities for free.

Visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/groupsandclubsdirectory](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/groupsandclubsdirectory).

## Antisocial drinking powers set to come into place this summer

Ashford Borough Council has given the green light to introduce powers to curb antisocial drinking in public.

The move comes after successful consultation with key local groups on the police



led initiative for a Designated Public Places Order (DPPO) for Ashford town centre, surrounding parks and open spaces.

A DPPO gives police wider powers to deal with alcohol related nuisance making it an offence for anyone to drink alcohol after being asked by a police officer not to do so. It also gives them powers to confiscate and dispose of alcohol and arrest people if they fail to comply with an officer's request.

It is not a comprehensive ban on drinking in the open air and will not affect people enjoying a social drink in a public area or park in a considerate and responsible manner.

The DPPO covers Ashford town centre including North, South and Victoria Parks, the areas around the railway station, Civic Centre and Stour Centre, Queen Mother's Park and the Bowen's Field wetlands.

Visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/alcohol](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/alcohol) for more information.



## Make your garden an award winning haven for wildlife

Postage stamp or palatial, no matter what the size of your garden you can enter this year's Kent Wildlife Gardening Awards scheme organised by Kent Wildlife Trust, in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society and Kent's local councils.

Entry is free and open to anyone who gardens in Kent including householders, businesses, community groups, schools and allotments.

Closing date for entries is 30 June and by late summer, Kent Wildlife Trust will have assessed all gardens entered into the scheme and each will receive an award of bronze, silver or gold. Gold winners will also get a commemorative plaque to display.

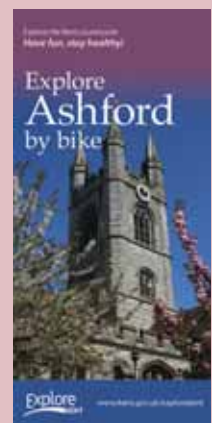
For full details and entry form visit [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk).

## On your bike

A new cycle route guide for Ashford has been published to encourage more people to cycle around the borough.

Did you know there are over 30 miles of safe, traffic-free cycle paths in Ashford just waiting to be explored?

Cycling around Ashford can be fun, so why not get on your bike this summer?



To find out more and download a copy of the leaflet visit [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent).



## Are you struggling with your mortgage?

Don't worry help may be at hand from the government backed Mortgage Rescue Scheme set up to help vulnerable homeowners.

There are two schemes available. The first involves selling your property to a registered social landlord who would rent it back to you on a three year tenancy with you paying a below market level rent.

The second option is where a registered social landlord would purchase a share in the property which would reduce the monthly mortgage payments.

To find out more pop into the Ashford Gateway in Park Mall and speak to a Housing Options Officer or visit [www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk) or call **01233 330688**.



## Cheaper search fees good news for homebuyers

Ashford Borough Council has lowered its search fees from £140 to £105 per search a real bonus for hard-pressed homebuyers.

For more information about local searches go to [www.ashford.gov.uk/buyingandsellingyourhome](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/buyingandsellingyourhome).



## Food Safety Week – 15 to 21 June

With a sharp rise in Listeria cases in the over 60's this year's focus is storage and handling food in the home.

You can reduce the risk of contracting Listeria by storing food correctly by:

- Keeping fridges at the correct temperature.
- Following the storage instructions provided on the label.
- Using food by its Use-By date.

For more information on Food Safety Week and food hygiene visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/food](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/food) or [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).



## And don't forget Scores on the Doors

The Scores on the Doors website is a quick and easy way to find out about the food hygiene standards of local businesses which are given a star rating based on how well they meet hygiene criteria. The better the standard, the higher the star rating.



Ashford Borough Council was one of the first council's in the country to join the scheme which has been adopted by the Food Standards Agency. They inspected over 800 local businesses including restaurants, cafés, pubs and takeaways. You can also find out how clean your child's school canteen is, which are the best rated butchers, caterers and farm shops – even the hygiene standards of mobile burger vans.

To make informed choices about where you eat or buy food visit [www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk](http://www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk).



## Business rate relief on the way

A government scheme to help spread the cost of business rates is set to come into effect this summer.

The scheme gives businesses the option to spread the costs of this year's rate increase over the next three years.

Businesses must continue to pay rates for 2009 -10 until the scheme is in place and new bills are issued.

A fact sheet is available to download from [www.ashford.gov.uk/businessrates](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/businessrates).



# Get in touch

## How to contact Ashford Borough Council

<b>Telephone</b>	01233 331111 8.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 5.00pm Friday
<b>Typetalk</b>	01233 330744
<b>Out of Hours/Emergency</b>	01233 629911
<b>24 hour Payment Line</b>	01233 330625
<b>Fax</b>	01233 645654
<b>Email</b>	customer.care@ashford.gov.uk
<b>Online</b>	www.ashford.gov.uk
<b>Post</b>	Ashford Borough Council Civic Centre, Tannery Lane Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL
<b>Visit</b>	Customer Contact Centre, Civic Centre 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Thursday 9.00am – 4.30pm Friday
<b>Out and about</b>	Ashford Gateway, 19 Park Mall, Ashford, Kent TN24 8RY  <b>Tel:</b> 0845 8 247 247 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm Saturday  Tenterden Gateway, 2 Manor Row, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6HP  <b>Tel:</b> 01580 762558 9.00am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm Saturday  <b>Gateway online</b> <b>Email:</b> info@ashfordgateway.co.uk <b>Online:</b> www.ashfordgateway.co.uk

## Council services and useful information

### Kent County Council

<b>Website</b>	www.kent.gov.uk
<b>24 Hour Helpline</b>	0845 8 247 247
<b>Environment &amp; Waste</b>	0845 8 247 600
<b>Highways and Transport</b> <i>(including road works, potholes and street lighting)</i>	0845 8 247 800
<b>Kent Libraries</b>	01622 671411
<b>Social Care &amp; Health</b>	0845 8 247 100
<b>Trading Standards</b>	01622 221012

### Emergency Services

*If it's an emergency dial 999, otherwise, use the numbers below:*

<b>Kent Police (Ashford &amp; Tenterden)</b>	01303 850055
<b>Community Safety Unit</b>	01233 330891
<b>William Harvey Hospital</b>	01233 633331

### Leisure & Tourism

<b>Stour Centre</b>	01233 663503
<b>Julie Rose Stadium</b>	01233 613131
<b>Kingsnorth Recreation Centre</b>	01233 503846
<b>Ashford Tourist Information Centre</b>	01233 629165
<b>Pitchside &amp; Courtside</b> <i>(formerly Ashford Mini Soccer Centre)</i>	01233 896511

### Other useful phone numbers

<b>Ashford's Future</b>	01233 330812
<b>Citizens Advice Bureau</b>	01233 626185
<b>Environment Agency</b> <i>(polluted ditches and watercourses)</i>	0870 8 506506
<b>Fraudline</b> (benefit fraud)	0800 026 2456

## August Bank Holiday Opening Hours Normal hours apply unless stated below.

The Civic Centre, Ashford Gateway and Tenterden Gateway will be **closed** on: **31st August** (Bank Holiday Monday)

Ashford and Tenterden Gateway will be open as normal on Saturday 29th August.

## Ashford Borough Council Committee Meeting Dates

### June

- Tuesday 9th** - Overview & Scrutiny
- Wednesday 10th** - Planning
- Wednesday 10th** - Selection & Constitutional Review
- Friday 12th** - Transport Forum
- Thursday 25th** - Executive
- Monday 29th** - Standards
- Tuesday 30th** - Joint Transportation Board

### July

- Wednesday 1st** - Planning
- Tuesday 7th** - Overview & Scrutiny
- Thursday 9th** - Council
- Wednesday 22nd** - Planning
- Thursday 23rd** - Executive

### August

- Tuesday 4th** - Overview & Scrutiny
- Wednesday 12th** - Planning
- Thursday 27th** - Executive

# Readers' survey

## Tell us what you think and



Ashford Voice aims to improve the way we keep you informed.

What our readers think of the publication really matters to us - we want to hear your views about the magazine so that we can make it better.

Tell us what you think and you will be entered into a free prize draw to win £100. You can also complete the questionnaire online at [www.ashford.gov.uk/voice](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/voice).



**1. How easy is the magazine to read?**

- very easy  easy  neither easy nor difficult  difficult  very difficult  can't say

**2. How would you rate the design?**

- very good  good  neither good nor poor  poor  very poor  can't say

**3. How would you rate the articles?**

- very useful  useful  not very useful  can't say

**4. How often do you recall receiving a copy in the last 12 months?**

- once  twice  three times  four times  can't say

**5. This edition of Ashford Voice cost 18.5p per magazine for each home in the Ashford borough. Do you think this represents good value for money?**

- yes  no

**6. How much of Ashford Voice do you read?**

- All or almost all of it  Most of it  Not much, just flick through

**7. If you could change anything about the magazine, what would it be?**

**8. How old were you on your last birthday?**

**9. Are you male or female?**

- Male  Female

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

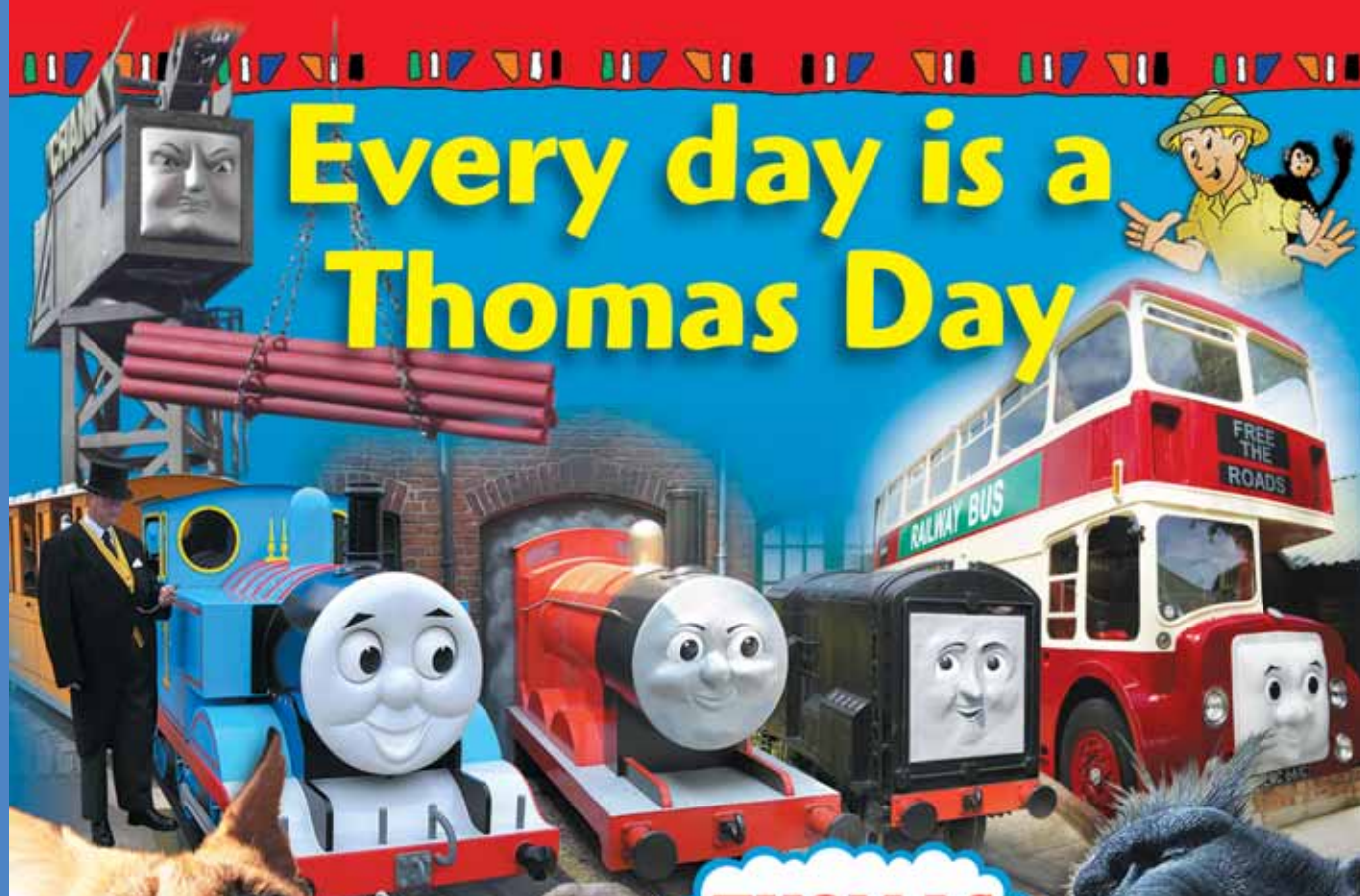
Postcode: .....

Tel No: .....

Email: .....

Tick if you wish to receive further information from Ashford Borough Council and partners involved in the plans for Ashford's Future. For a full list of our Terms and Conditions, please refer to our website, [www.ashford.gov.uk/competitions](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/competitions) or write to us at the address on Page 2.

# Every day is a Thomas Day



**THOMAS  
& FRIENDS**

# DRUSILLAS PARK

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At Alfriston just off the A27 near Eastbourne Call 01323 874100 [www.drusillas.co.uk](http://www.drusillas.co.uk)