

ASHFORD FOR YOU

Issue 18 | Autumn 2022

YOUR BOROUGH, YOUR MAGAZINE

FABRIC OF ASHFORD

Family fun at town centre event

READER SURVEY RESULTS

LIFELINE ANYTIME

WHAT'S ON



WIN

- Champagne tea and stay at country house hotel
- Pasta making lesson and dinner for two

 **Ashford**
Borough Council



ACHIEVE YOUR AMBITIONS AT ASHFORD COLLEGE

At Ashford College, you'll get to meet a diverse variety of people as you are inspired and upskilled in the subject of your choice.



Our modern campus offers an inspirational learning environment, filled with industry standard equipment to ensure you're well placed to progress into the career you choose. The College is a hive of activity and learning, offering a focussed and fun environment for your Further Education.

Thanks to its great location in the centre of Ashford, it offers the perfect learning environment for the community it serves, and with strong bus availability, it's also perfect for those in surrounding villages who want to access the excellent facilities on offer.

Another reason for coming to Ashford College is the wide range of courses that you can take up. These programmes include BTECs, access to higher education, part-time courses, short courses, apprenticeships and supported learning. Particularly exciting are the new T Level qualifications, which are equivalent to three A Levels and have 45 days of work experience built in.

Whatever you choose to do, you'll be fully supported by our passionate and caring staff who are on hand to ensure you have the best time at the College before heading onto Higher Education or your career of choice.

With our expert lecturers' help, you will have the knowledge and confidence to progress onto university or the workplace. Whether you study Computing, Music or Barbering, there's sure to be a perfect course for you that fits your interests.

Also, your age is no barrier to you studying at Ashford College as there are a range of adult-only courses available. Designed to fit around your life, they offer a fantastic opportunity to boost current skills and meet new people who share your interests. Among your options are part-time BTECs to start a new path, evening courses that dive into a budding hobby, and professional courses that keep you at the forefront of your industry.

We look forward to providing you with as many opportunities as possible for your next step.

Welcome



Welcome to the autumn edition of *Ashford For You*, where once again we pack in a range of features that I hope will provide all of you with something of interest. There are some fantastic music and community events coming up this autumn that should suit

all musical tastes and I hope you get the chance to attend and enjoy them.

There's a strong focus on health and fitness, with news of the impending reopening of the swimming pool at Tenterden Leisure Centre after extensive improvement works plus local athletes can now make full use of the newly-laid running track at the Julie Rose Stadium. Meanwhile over at Victoria Park it's great to see work underway on the eagerly-awaited improvements there, including the cycling pump track.

In the last edition we asked readers for their views of the magazine and the overall feedback was very positive. Over 73% strongly agreed or agree to some extent that the magazine keeps residents up to date with what the Council is doing, while 77% think *Ashford For You* keeps residents very or quite well informed. When asked how you rate the magazine overall, 76% of you said excellent, very good or good.

Our thanks to all of you who took part in the survey, our invitation to readers to suggest articles for future editions have provided us with considerable food for thought, and we will be examining how best we can take up some of your ideas.

Finally, don't forget to enter our fabulous competitions on page 22 – there are some terrific prizes waiting to be won by a few lucky residents!

Tracey Kerly

Tracey Kerly
Chief executive, Ashford Borough Council

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Editorial

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Get in touch!

To comment on this magazine, to tell us what you'd like to see more of and maybe to submit an article of your own:

Email: media@ashford.gov.uk (subject line NEWS) or

Write to: Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL

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 [ashfordboroughcouncil](https://www.youtube.com/ashfordboroughcouncil)  @Ashfordbc  ashfordcouncil

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Find your borough councillor: www.ashford.gov.uk/councillors

Please note: For current information on the Civic Centre opening hours and face-to-face appointments please visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/contact-us/get-in-touch-another-way

Learn more:
ashfordcollege.ac.uk





Nuts and Bolts aim high

These are heady days for fans of Ashford United as the Homelands Park club embark on an exciting new era both on and off the pitch.

Work is expected to start soon on the redevelopment of the stadium after planning consent for the building of 10 start-up business units, a new canopy to house supporters, an extra full-size 3G pitch and new changing rooms.

Fundraising for the new all-weather pitch and changing rooms is underway, with the club already receiving the backing of The Football Foundation, The Stadium Fund and local funders. It's hoped that the works will be completed before the 2023/24 season.

The club has ambitions to build an indoor sports hall, and in recent years it has invested £750,000.00 in the stadium, which also hosts Kennington FC.

It also serves as a training ground for the club's youth teams plus many other local teams.

Keen to be seen as a fully inclusive community club, this season it has launched its own ladies team and a disability team. Around 1,000 players representing 25 teams use the site each week and with the installation of the second 3G pitch this could double.

Putting the club on a sound financial footing has been boosted by investment in event facilities like three function rooms and bars that can be hired to generate revenue.

Owner Don Cosbie said: "With these developments it will help us take local football to even greater heights. Our future is bright and with academies at various levels beginning in September, the next England superstar could yet be an Ashfordian!"

For more information visit www.ashfordunitedfc.com

Fabric fun



Throughout the summer, families took part in arts and crafts workshops as part of the fun-filled 'The Fabric of Ashford' community event, creating their pieces of the "Ashford Tapestry" that was unveiled on 20 August.



Need a little extra help?



If you've received written communication from us but are having difficulty understanding it, don't worry. Call us on 01233 331111 or send us a private message on Facebook and one of our officers will be happy to go through it with you or arrange a call back:

www.facebook.com/ashfordboroughcouncil

Being hard of hearing can be a frustrating experience but remember you're not alone. Our customer service team work with SignLive, a deaf-owned and deaf-led company who specialise in providing free British Sign Language interpreting services. Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/contact-us/signlive-translations

100 up for Ashford Rotary

Ashford Rotary Club is celebrating its 100th anniversary. A century ago a group of men met in the Saracen's Head pub (no longer there) in Ashford town centre and decided to join the Rotary organisation, first formed in the USA a decade earlier. The club was one of the first formed in Kent.

Membership consists of 42 men and women from all walks of life who support local good causes. The motto is "service above self" and members have lots of fun in doing what they do.

To mark its centenary the club installed an oak framed gazebo at Conningbrook Lakes country park. After four years of fundraising, mainly through donations from members plus support from Ashford Borough Council and The Frank Brake Memorial Trust, the community shelter has been built close to the lakes.



Summer may be over but did you know that booking for the popular Santa Specials at the Kent & East Sussex Railway has already opened and tickets are selling fast? The railway has been welcoming families to meet Santa aboard their trains for nearly 50 years. To find out more visit www.kesr.org.uk

Saving water

We all need to redouble our efforts to save water, as communities and businesses pull together in the face of the drought and widespread restrictions on water usage.

With just a few simple actions you can make a big change to the amount of water you use – which not only protects the environment but helps save on your bills too!

For more tips on water conservation visit www.southeastwater.co.uk/help/save-water



Safer Streets

As the nights get darker, it's important that all our residents feel safe on our streets.

We have developed Streetwise, as part of our Safer Streets project, which is an app that you can download onto your smartphone and identify areas and routes in the town that have the best safety provisions in place.

You can also find Safe Spaces on the app – places around the town that you can go into and ask for help if you're feeling unsafe. You can download for free via your Apple or Android app store.



Time to Restore

Restore is a new Christian mental health service within Fountain Church in Ashford. It is a local service for the community, welcoming all people, all ages, believers, and non-believers who may be struggling with their mental health and wellbeing.

More information at www.fountainchurch.net, email fountainchurchrestore@gmail.com Twitter @RestoreFChurch, Facebook [restorefountainchurch](https://www.facebook.com/restorefountainchurch)

Competition winners



Hundreds of entries were received for our fantastic competitions in the last issue. The winners of the four family passes on the Kent & East Sussex Railway are Sharon Curtis, Nicola Harbige, Philip Light and Helen Smyth. The winner of the £200 gift card at the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet is Gemma Boreham. Thanks to everyone who took part – see page 22 for our latest exciting competitions.

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Focus on rough sleepers

The Council has been awarded more than £1 million for the next three years from the Government's Year 5 Rough Sleeping Initiative programme.

The initiative was launched in 2018 to tackle the rising levels of rough sleeping, and we were successful in applying for funding in previous years. The money allows us to recruit additional resources, as well having funds to help people into accommodation. We will be able to help those at risk of homelessness by assisting them to remain in their homes or, if this fails, help to secure alternative accommodation.

We have also been successful in securing funding from the Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP). Its aim is to provide Move-On homes, available as long-term assets, and accompanying support services to achieve a sustainable cut in rough sleeping.

In Ashford we have capital funding to deliver 15 units of accommodation and revenue funding to recruit support officers who will undertake needs assessments and complete a housing support plan, individual to each client.

Mayor's auction

Tenterden Mayor Cllr John Crawford is holding a charity auction in aid of the Tenterden Memory Café on Saturday 8 October. The charity provides informal settings and activities for residents living with dementia-related illnesses to share with their family and carers.

Go to www.tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk for details on attending and donating.

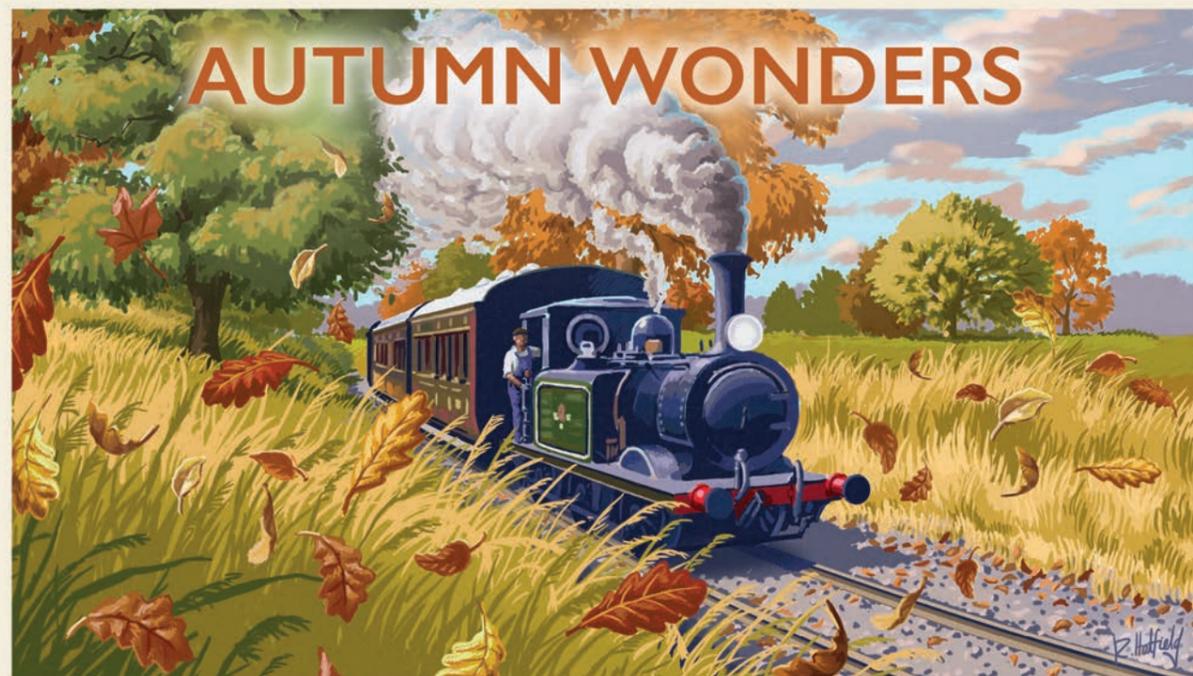


Enjoying our newsletter



Thanks to all of you who have subscribed (over 650!) to our newsletter and we hope everyone is enjoying our mini editions so far.

If you want to get the latest news from us direct to your email inbox, why not sign up to keep yourself updated on what's going on in the borough. Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/get-updates-from-the-council or simply scan the QR code above.



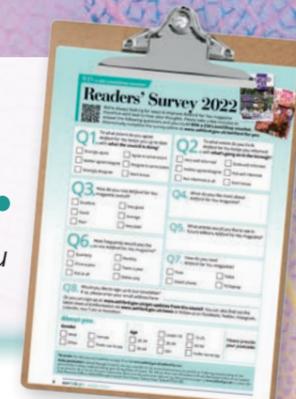
ENJOY THE CHANGING COLOURS OF THE SEASON BY RAIL

BOOK ONLINE AND SAVE
www.kesr.org.uk



And our survey said...

In our last edition we asked readers for their thoughts on *Ashford For You* magazine, we're pleased to reveal that:



Over **73%** strongly agree or agreed to some extent

the magazine keeps residents up to date

77% think *Ashford For You* keeps residents very or quite well informed

76% rate *Ashford For You* magazine as good, very good or excellent

Readers like the **local, community focused news**, the **What's On** section and **competitions/offers** most about the magazine. They also appreciated that it is **well-written, colourful** and **positive**.



Areas for improvement

We also received ideas for future editions such as more information about local community groups, and promotion of local businesses. Other suggestions included more focus on conservation and the environment and articles about Ashford's history. We'll try our best to incorporate some of these ideas in future editions.

While the survey may have closed, we'd still love to hear from our readers on ways to improve the magazine or ideas for future features. Please contact the editorial team via media@ashford.gov.uk

Thank you to our readers

A big thank you to those readers who took the time to fill in the survey. **Congratulations** to Limbu Sheetal from Singleton, who won a £50 Love2Shop voucher.



Green for go in the park

We are pleased (finally!) to share works for the £5m+ Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Project to revitalise and restore our much-loved park have now begun.

The changes happening now will help update the space for Ashford's growing 21st Century community, acknowledging the benefits of green space to mental health, diversifying the recreational opportunities, and creating space that can be better shared with local wildlife.

Check out below what to expect to see happening across the park in 2022-2023!



WHAT TO EXPECT

Sensory garden

Planting of a colourful and fragrant garden in the woodland meadow, laying a new network of paths to open up this corner of the park. **Coming summer 2022.**

Wetland area

Creating an entirely new wetland on the border between Victoria Park and Watercress Fields. Installing a timber zig-zag pathway, a viewing platform, and bridges across the waterways. **Coming autumn 2022.**

River bank

Stabilising the riverbank and thinning out the natural woodland to open up views, creating a new picnic spot, new seating areas and a viewing platform. **Coming autumn 2022.**

Fountain Piazza

Improvements to the formal piazza surrounding the Grade II* listed Hurbert Fountain, including new lighting, surfacing, path, seating and planting to better frame and present the park's most iconic feature. **Coming winter 2022.**

Community Building

Constructing a new café with alfresco dining veranda and hireable community space in the heart of the park. Refurbishing the existing nursery, as well as replacing the toilets with new changing places facilities. **Coming summer 2023.**

New playground

A brand new play area including a zip-wire, accessible swings, sunken trampolines, hillside slides, and a bespoke new climbing frame! **Coming summer 2023.**

Community Spaces

Creating a custom-built work yard for the new Victoria Park Volunteers to undertake training and store equipment. **Coming summer 2023.**

Multi Use Games Area

Relaying the surface and making improvements. **Coming summer 2023.**

We are working to keep disruption at the park to a minimum, however there will be some to certain areas whilst work is underway, including a couple of footpaths, but other routes

are being kept clear to ensure access throughout the park is maintained. You will also see a new access road for contractors to use for deliveries to avoid mixing vehicles and pedestrians.

You may have seen the removal of some trees. We have had to lose a number as they have been identified as dead or dangerous, or being thinned out as a response to public consultation, however the project will see more than 1,500 new trees planted in Victoria Park.

Keep up to date by heading to www.victoriaparkashford.co.uk



Did you know?

Hothfield Heathlands, managed by Kent Wildlife Trust on behalf of Ashford Borough Council, is undergoing a range of exciting projects, designed to improve the site for wildlife and the people that visit.

There is a new 500m accessible path, suitable for wheelchairs and buggies, taking visitors through a beautiful area of woodland

and under majestic oaks and chestnuts. It is a great location to spy great spotted woodpeckers, tree creepers and other woodland birds.

Over the next few months, we will be doing lots of wildlife habitat works, making the reserve better for the rare orchids, insects, animals and birds that make Hothfield Heathlands their home.



Willow sculptures

This autumn young people from local schools and youth groups will be invited to design and create their own Willow Sculpture for Victoria Park with artist Julia Clarke. Inspiration will be from sculptures created by Julia over the summer and will form part of the park's growing art collection.

Resources for schools

School workshops will be taking place throughout autumn with artist Becky Vincer to create a new fun learning resource, aimed at young people in primary school studying at KS2 level. Inspired by the 'Wreck This Journal' book, it's aim is to support the achievement of KS2 learning goals and learn about nature and wildlife, the history and geography of the park.



LIFELINE Anytime



Nearly 2,000 people across the South East know that help is constantly available at their home or work (and soon even when out and about) at the touch of a button, 24 hours a day, thanks to the Lifeline Anytime service.

Our fully trained operators act on your behalf to access emergency services, contact a family member or loved one to let them know you are okay, or simply to offer the advice that you need.

Operating 24 hours a day, Lifeline Anytime gives you instant access via an emergency button to get the vital support you need. A lifeline system within your home could be lifesaving in situations where you may not be able to use a phone due to illness or injury.

Acting as your personal alarm, when pressed the button sends a direct signal to the Lifeline Anytime call centre in Ashford where skilled and experienced operators can

speak to you via a built-in microphone. It is simple enough that a child would be able to press it in the event of an emergency and summon help.

When you might need us

- If you are injured or unwell
- If you are unable to get up or if you fall
- If you have a fire
- If you fear/suffer domestic abuse
- If you are pregnant and go into labour

- If there's an intruder in your home or garden
- If you are a lone worker and need a quick way to contact the police or emergency services in the event of a threatening situation or accident

We have more than 30 years of experience managing community alarm services and all our call handlers are vetted using enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Lifeline Anytime is highly affordable. After an initial installation fee of £42, the annual monitoring cost starts from only £199.20 per year. That's just 54p a day.

"I have this service to give me peace of mind for my vulnerable son who may need it in an emergency. I have had to contact Lifeline Anytime a number of times and always find the staff so helpful and courteous. I would highly recommend this service."

Miss Burden – Wye

Want to know more?

Check out our new website for all the details on how the system works, additional equipment that you can purchase along with clear pricing information.

Visit www.lifelineanytime.co.uk. You can also call us on 01233 642095 or email support@lifelineanytime.co.uk



Do you want flexible working hours?

Do you enjoy driving and meeting new people?

Then consider becoming a licensed taxi driver through Ashford Borough Council.

Existing licensed operators have positions available for full and part time work.

Please see:

www.ashford.gov.uk/licensing/taxis/driver/new-driver-licence for more information and how to apply.





What's On

With a wealth of events and activities, we've got plenty to keep you entertained this autumn...

23 September, 1.00pm - 6.00pm
NGS Open Day - Godinton House & Gardens
Godinton House and Gardens, TN23 3BP
Your admission ticket will support the work of this worthy charity. House, Garden and Tearoom open.
www.godintonhouse.co.uk

15 October, 7.30pm - 10.30pm
Soul of a Woman
Revelation St Mary's, TN23 1QG
Powerful, professional and an unrivalled performance. Hear the haunting melodies of Etta James and Whitney Houston, the unmistakable symphonies of Dusty Springfield and Chaka Khan and feel the hairs on the back of your neck tingle at the acoustic arrangements of Adele and Aretha.
www.revelationashford.co.uk

14-23 October
Tenterdine
Explore Tenterden's fantastic food and drink industry as the town becomes centre stage for locals and tourists with this exciting culinary week. Explore specially created menus and a few surprises along the way!
www.tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk



21 - 23 October
Hopfest, Beer Festival at Old Dairy Brewery
Old Dairy Brewery, TN30 6HE
Old Dairy Brewery HOPFEST Beer Festival Showcasing the very best of Kent Green Hop beers and celebrating Oktoberfest 2022 with Authentic Bavarian beers and local German styles available. Live Music & Local Food Trucks.
www.olddairybrewery.com



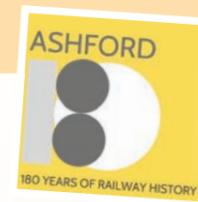
30 October
Halloween at The Mill
Willesborough Windmill, TN24 0QG
Dress up and come along to our family event with tours of the 'scary' Mill. There will be face painting, story time and a craft table. Cream teas and light refreshments in the Barn Cafe.
www.willesboroughwindmill.co.uk



11 November, 7.30pm - 10.30pm
Everything Changes - Take That Tribute Show
Revelation St Mary's, TN23 1QG
This amazing production will see you enjoy all the songs from the early days up to the current hits, so immerse yourself into the Take That spectacular and sing, dance and party all night long.
www.revelationashford.co.uk

Carnival of the Baubles is back and bigger than ever!

Our favourite event of the year – Carnival of the Baubles – is back! Loveashford, will be working again with Emergency Exit Arts, Made in Ashford and other local artists to bring this spectacular parade to life. We will be heading to the high street with hand-crafted lanterns a plenty on Saturday 26 November, so make sure to save the date in your diary. This year's theme and further details will be announced shortly, so keep an eye out on our Loveashford site: www.loveashford.com or on social media.



19 and 20 November
Ashford 180
Various locations around Ashford
Join AIMREC for a celebration of 180 years of railways in Ashford including model railway exhibitions, historical displays, workshops, tours and specially commissioned artwork by well-known local railway artist Mike Turner.
www.aimrec.co.uk/Ashford180

25 November, 8pm - 10.30pm
The Comedy Network
Revelation St Mary's, TN23 1QG
Come and unwind after a stressful week at one of our Comedy Network comedy club shows. Gather your friends, grab a drink from the bar and enjoy laugh out loud comedy from some of the hottest comedians on the circuit.
www.revelationashford.co.uk



3 December, 9.30am - 12pm
Christmas Wreath Workshop at Godinton House & Gardens
Godinton House and Gardens, TN23 3BP
Join us in the Great Hall for our traditional wreath workshop. This is a popular workshop with limited places, book early to avoid disappointment.
www.godintonhouse.co.uk



Create Music Village

Throughout October, Ashford will become a hub of live music, as we welcome Create Music Village to town. Revelation, Macknade, Coachworks and The Glass House will be opening their doors to the very best that live music has to offer.

From DJs to Indie, rock to hip hop, big names to rising stars, there is something for everyone; and with all of the venues in easy walking distance of each other you can experience a whole host of different musical styles with your friends and family.

The line-up which has been curated by Andre Dack, Director of the famed Ramsgate Music Hall and Ashford's own Casey Heyburn, best known for his role with BBC Introducing at Radio Kent, was announced on 21 July at Coachworks – with names such as Eddi Reader, DJ Hooch, William the Conqueror and Turin Brakes on the bill.

As well as the four main venues, there is also an amazing programme of village fringe events and workshops taking place around Ashford.

For more information and to book tickets, visit: www.createmusicvillage.co.uk



Tenterden Folk Festival

The Tenterden Folk Festival 2022 runs from Thursday 29 September to Sunday 2 October with over 50 events across the town, free for the whole family to enjoy.

Nationwide performers will gather in Tenterden for free music sessions, Morris and folk display dancing, street entertainment and concerts throughout the town. The Recreation Ground will host a craft fair with music and dance for this not to be missed annual event. For full details go to www.tenterdenfolkfestival.org.uk.

Let's Get It Right

We're a borough of real recyclers. Real people, with real lives, who may sometimes chuck without checking once in a while. We've all been there. But the reality is that wrong items placed in your recycling bin can cause contamination and can prevent a whole lorry load of material from being recycled.

We've come a long way, but there's still room to grow. So, if in doubt check and get recycling right. It won't take much to make a real difference, let's do this together.

Items that should **NOT** be put in your green home recycling bin are:

- Black bags
- Disposable nappies
- Food (containers must be emptied of all food)
- Wood
- Clothes and shoes (these should be placed in a separate carrier bag on TOP of your bin)

Recycle Week 2022 will be taking place 19-25 September and will inspire people to Get Real to improve recycling, tackling myths around recycling – such as wishcycling and reducing resident confusion.

For more information and tips check out: www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling-waste-bins



Don't forget S.C.R.A.P

Fly-tipping is harming Ashford's beautiful countryside and our urban areas, posing a danger to wildlife and livestock and costing farmers and landowner's time and money to clear away. Don't be one of those who have been caught out recently and been hit with heavy fines.

Households and businesses have a legal duty of care when it comes to what happens to their waste.

Our Environmental Enforcement Team continues to work tirelessly to clamp down on illegal fly-tipping right across the borough and have handed out fines totalling more than £10,000 since the team was formed less than a year ago.

Many of the leads that end with offenders being caught come from residents alerting the team to fly-tipping incidents by using the Report It page on our website: www.ashford.gov.uk/environmental-concerns/report-a-street-issue/fly-tipping

Beware rogue waste carriers

The team say that fly-tippers often target households via social media or local advertising, luring customers in with cheap rates to dispose of unwanted furniture, building rubble or garden waste. However, these unlicensed waste carriers often dump the waste wherever they can get away with it.

Householders or small businesses found to be using these rogues to dispose of their waste can be prosecuted by the Council, with Fixed Penalty Notices of up to £400 per offence. Failure to pay may result in court action and even heavier fines.

If using a commercial service, you must check whether someone is licensed to carry waste by calling the Environment Agency on 03708 506506 or visit their website. It also helps if you receive a written receipt or transfer note, including contact details, description of waste removed and details of where the waste is being taken to.

So, before you hire someone to take your waste away remember the S.C.R.A.P code:

- S**uspect ALL waste carriers.
- C**heck with the Environment Agency that the provider taking your waste is licensed at: www.environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers
- R**efuse unexpected offers to have waste taken away.
- A**sk what will happen to your waste.
- P**aperwork should be obtained – get a full receipt.





Reduce your home heat loss

The average household in the UK produces 2.7 tonnes of CO₂ every year from heating their home. Most of the CO₂ emitted is through heat loss from the roof, windows, walls and unwanted gaps.

By tackling heat loss you can dramatically reduce your carbon footprint and energy bills.

If you are looking for little yet simple fixes to insulate your home, we have some **top tips** (right).

You can find out more information at: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/reducing-home-heat-loss

Don't forget

Portable gas heaters are not allowed in council homes on safety grounds.



Scan here for information on Kent County Council website for grants available to repair and improve your property

A Top tips

B Draught proofing – Draughts happen where there are unwanted gaps in the construction of your home, and where openings are left uncovered, you should block up any that let cold air in and warm air out.

C Insulating your hot water pipes – Pipe insulation consists of a foam tube that covers the exposed pipes between your hot water cylinder and boiler, reducing the amount of heat lost and, therefore, keeping your water hotter for longer.

D Bleed your radiators – Yearly bleeding of radiators will reduce potential cold spots throughout your home and make your radiators more effective.

E Top up your hot water cylinder insulation – Nearly all UK hot water cylinders have some insulation, however those with hot water tank jacket under 25mm thick could benefit from top-up insulation to an 80mm jacket.

SAVE THE PLANET

Great Big Green Week 24 September – 2 October 2022

During this week we will be supporting a variety of events celebrating community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. For more information on what events are taking place please visit our social media channels or www.ashford.gov.uk/climatechange



The place to be...

Did you know that Ashford Borough Council is one of the largest and most progressive employers in the district? That we are dedicated to sourcing and retaining the best staff to serve the local community?

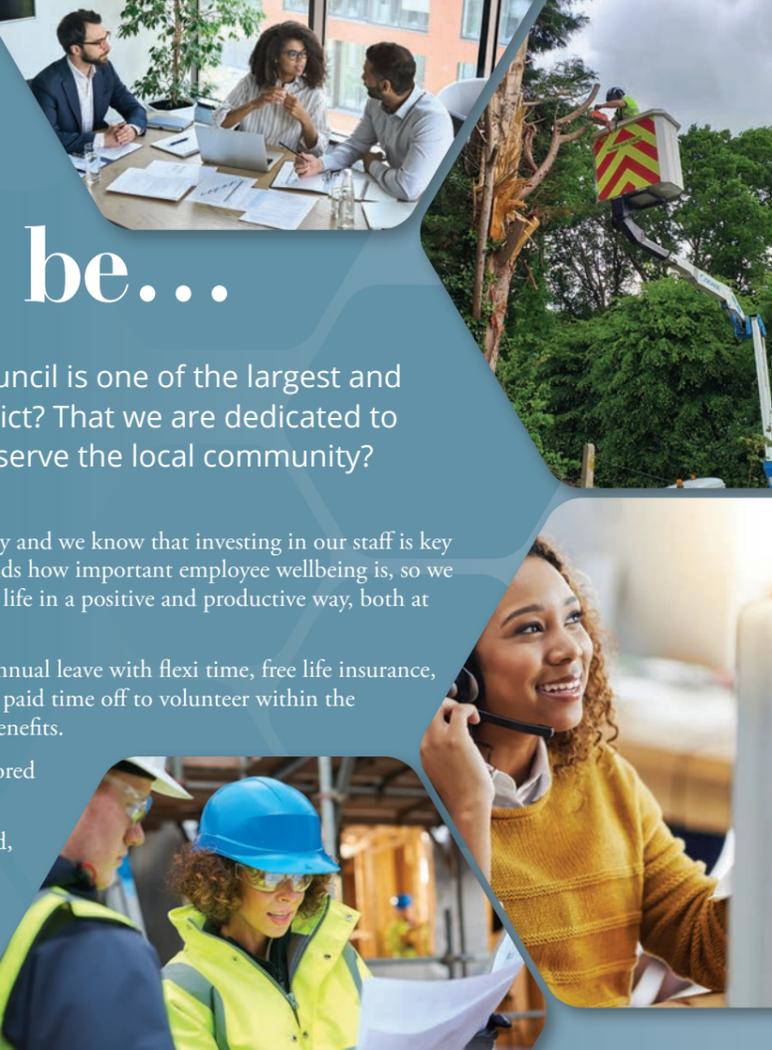
We strive to be the best borough council in the country and we know that investing in our staff is key to that. The Council puts people first and understands how important employee wellbeing is, so we offer flexible ways of working to help structure your life in a positive and productive way, both at home and in the office.

We offer an excellent salary-linked pension scheme, generous annual leave with flexi time, free life insurance, supportive relocation package, discounts with local companies, paid time off to volunteer within the community, a cycle to work scheme and a host of other great benefits.

There are also opportunities for training and development, tailored to you and your role within the authority.

Ashford is a great place to work because our staff are committed, friendly and passionate – to find out more about career opportunities and how you could make a difference to the people we serve, visit www.ashford.gov.uk/working-for-us.

If you are looking for a particular role you can set up a job alert that will notify you when such a vacancy becomes available.



The Stour Centre & Julie Rose Stadium

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A Sporting Chance makes a difference



Last summer Ashford Borough Council teamed up with Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) on a year-long project funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner, the council and the Premier League. It engages with young people in some of our most high-need areas using the power of sport to create safer and more respectful communities.

As well as ball court sessions at Stanhope and Victoria Park, Premier League Kicks sessions took place at Towers School. More than 380 hours of mentoring have been provided to young people showing concerns including anti-social behaviour, poor school attendance and carrying offensive weapons.

A County Lines and exploitation workshop explaining the dangers of being involved in drugs and the risks and signs of being exploited was delivered to over 900 young people at Towers School. The workshop was hard hitting, the leaders showing how easy it is for young people to be manipulated but feedback was extremely positive, with 95% of students saying they had a better understanding of the dangers.

Success and the future

The projects have provided early help and prevention, so reducing the need for agency intervention later, raising education and employment aspirations, reducing education drop out and increasing the life skills and resilience of young people.

Following the success of the programme we are in the process of securing funding of around £150,000 to support the project for another three years. This is likely to be a mix of council and third-party funding.

Positive outcomes

Cllr Peter Feacey, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing said: "This project empowers communities and changes lives by improving health, education, employment and reducing crime. We can see that offering these engaging opportunities can have a profound impact on their mental wellbeing which, in turn can only encourage and inspire them to forge a healthier and happier future.

"It is imperative that funding is found to continue the fantastic work and positive outcomes already seen in the short time this project has been in place. Another three years would ensure that the benefits seen in the last nine months continue to grow and impact positively on the local community and the young people involved."

Carl Krauhaus, CACT's Head of Early Help and Prevention, said: "We have made positive progress in Ashford. The funding has enabled us to embed ourselves within the area, providing a range of diversionary activities and targeted one to one support for many young people.

"We thank the council for the opportunity to bring our impactful services to the borough. We also thank all the partners and stakeholders who have welcomed us warmly and we look forward to hopefully being able to extend our services for a longer period to young people in the area."

"I came away from my session feeling that I had learned a lot. My tutor was very patient and I hope to have another session soon so that a small problem can be resolved."

Received from a lady who attended a Digital Drop-in session



Let's get Digital



Digital exclusion is not new but the pandemic heightened the issue for so many people. That is why Kent County Council's Leader took the decision to create Digital Kent and the Helping Hands scheme.

In partnership with many organisations, including Ashford Borough Council, Digital Kent is tackling digital exclusion in the county through several projects. Visit www.digitalkent.uk for more information.

Digital Champions Network

Digital Kent is developing a network of digital champion volunteers from organisations, businesses and the community to support their ambition to charge up the digital skills of our communities. Digital Champions are volunteers and can be anyone who is willing to support someone with their digital skills and confidence.

If you are interested in becoming a digital champion or would like to find out more visit www.kent.gov.uk/digitalchampions.

Drop-in sessions

Digital Kent has run several drop-in sessions around Kent, allowing people to come along and receive one-to-one support. They help people to get online safely, find out how to access services online, get connected or set up new devices. In Ashford they have already run sessions from The Gateway, Tenterden Town Hall and Stanhope Community Hub.

If you think your community could benefit from a local drop-in session and there is a community space that can be used, please contact the local Engagement Officer Doris Shaba-Jeffries on 03000 412938 or email doris.shaba-jeffries@kent.gov.uk.



Join the next sessions!

Upcoming digital drop-in sessions will take place at Ashford Gateway on 21 September, 19 October, 23 November and 14 December between 1pm and 3.30pm.

Further dates and locations for other sessions will be advertised locally.

Home comforts



Responding to the relentless pressure for more affordable housing, the council has passed the 600 mark for introducing new homes to our stock with another 200 in the pipeline.

With around 1,500 households on our waiting list, the council is accelerating its plans to provide more homes, and is developing on all appropriate pieces of land we own and looking to buy land that will help us build more homes.

We have reviewed the thousands of garage sites we own, looking for development potential. One scheme is the Thorne Estate in Pluckley, where we're consulting on building three high-quality, low-carbon houses on the site of an old garage.

Pipeline

The 600 homes delivered so far have been built by ourselves or bought off-plan, via Section 106 contributions from developers or through the street purchase programme, where properties in areas we already have stock are acquired off the open market. Of the 200 in the pipeline some are on the drawing board, others are navigating the consultation and planning process.

They are in rural and urban areas, and on carefully-selected infill sites. They include bungalows and flats, independent living schemes, and larger areas of land for affordable homes for general needs. Several are purpose-built properties with the needs of wheelchair users in mind.

We made the headlines when we bought the New Quarter in Ashford town centre – the £18.5m investment is the largest handover of general needs accommodation to be managed on one site by us. The renamed Somerset Heights and Stour Heights comprise 109 apartments and many of the lettings have been allocated to keyworkers.

Recent schemes

The three most recent schemes delivered 77 homes at a cost of £19.3m and we have a further nine sites to deliver in the next five years at a cost of around £50m. Homes England grant for the 77 units just delivered totalled £3.5m. Money well spent in providing new affordable homes.

High Halden is one of six sites in the South East featured in a £106.5m deal between housing association Optivo and Sage Homes, the largest provider of new affordable homes in England. The deal allows Sage to buy 420 new-build affordable homes from Optivo, who will manage the homes and receive funds to invest in building additional affordable homes. 43 of these new affordable homes are in High Halden.



A healthy distraction

Have you been looking for new ways to get your children away from the distractions of video games or mobile devices? The Julie Rose Stadium now boasts a new athletics running track that is perfect for the entire family to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle...

Located on Willesborough Road in Kennington and overlooking Conningbrook Lakes, visitors to the stadium can now enjoy and make use of a new resurfaced track after a £300,000 investment by the Council.

The track is once again ready to host world class athletics and triathlon events, making the stadium one of the finest facilities in the South East. The venue is home to Ashford Athletic Club, an active, accessible and accredited club with England Athletics, who use the track for regular

training, events and competitions throughout the year.

Following on from last year's complete refurbishment of the gym and exercise studio, the stadium boasts some of the best fitness equipment to improve the overall health and wellbeing offer for local people.

The next phase of investment will see the indoor running chute replaced along with a refurbishment of the indoor throwing cage.

To book a session visit www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/julie-rose-stadium

Tom Price, Area Manager for Ashford & Kent at Freedom Leisure, said: "We have enjoyed watching the transformation of the old track into the new and are all excited to see people using the track again and re-establishing ourselves as the heart of athletics in the area."

Investment in Tenterden Leisure Centre

Progress continues to be made following major works to transform Tenterden Leisure Centre with improvements to the roof, pool filtration system and redecoration of the poolside flume area after an investment of £1.5m by the Council and a £330,000 Government decarbonisation grant.

The Tenterden Leisure Centre Trust, Serco Leisure and the Council are working hard on getting this vital community asset fully reopen to residents but in the meantime, the gym, studios and sports hall are open. Updates on a reopening date for the pool will be announced on Facebook via www.facebook.com/tenterdenlc and the centre website www.tenterdenleisure.com



WIN champagne afternoon tea and stay at Little Silver hotel



Little Silver country hotel is a beautiful family-run business set in the heart of the Garden of England in Tenterden. With 16 ensuite rooms including beautiful four posters, the silver and platinum suite, luxury disability-friendly rooms paired with a lovely country garden and our renowned Oaks restaurant it offers a peaceful and relaxing stay. We pride

ourselves on weddings and civil ceremonies with a personal touch and a collection of regular and one-off events throughout the year.

Our lucky competition winner will check into a luxury four poster bedroom to enjoy for the evening, once settled they can visit our orangery overlooking our landscaped garden which offers some peace and tranquillity and here you will enjoy an afternoon tea for two with a bottle of champagne. The next morning breakfast is on us!

Visit www.little-silver.co.uk



WIN pasta lesson and dinner for two

Unità 4 is bringing fresh and authentic Italian cuisine to Ashford town centre. The Puglia native chef, Damiano, is spearheading this deliciously Italian venture at Ashford's Elwick Place. With fabulous dishes from the Italian regions closest to him, Damiano has curated a modernised menu of simple and flavourful dishes.

You can even learn to make your very own fresh pasta in Unità's specially-designed Pasta Workshop with their in-house pasta chef. With different classes available, aspiring cooks of all levels are sure to enjoy this incredible experience. And every week you can enjoy their Aperitivo Night and Happy Hour Weekends. So, come and join the famiglia at Unità 4 and try for yourself. For more information visit www.unita4.com

You can win a Pasta Package for two people (usual cost £90 per person) for a three hour experience to savour – it includes Aperitivo on arrival, a 90 minute pasta making lesson, and a drink and two-course meal prepared and served in our restaurant.

UNITÀ • 4

To enter your name in one of our two prize draws either:

* Email the editorial team at competition@ashford.gov.uk – put Little Silver Hotel or Unità 4 competition in the subject heading and include your full name, postal address and email. Please include a contact phone number.

* Send a postcard or sealed envelope with your name, address, email and contact phone number to: Ashford For You magazine, Communications, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1PL. Write Little Silver Hotel or Unità 4 competition entry on the card. We will contact the winners to request consent to provide your contact details to Little Silver Hotel or Unità 4 to enable you to claim your prize.

Terms & conditions: 1. The competition is open to UK residents aged 18 years or older except employees of the Promoter, their families, agents or any third party associated with the competition. 2. The closing date of the competition is **5pm on Friday 7 October 2022**. Entries received after this time will not be included. The prizes are non-transferable and non-refundable. There are no cash alternatives. 3. By accepting the prize you also agree to be bound by standard terms and conditions specified by the prize providers. Only one entry per person. Editor's decision is final.

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