

ASHFORD FOR YOU

Issue 4 Spring 2019

**WIN A
TRAVELODGE
FAMILY
WEEKEND
BREAK**

YOUR BOROUGH, YOUR MAGAZINE

LIGHTS CAMERA ASHFORD

Elwick Place makes its debut

SPECIAL 4 PAGE FEATURE

Our communities in focus

GREEN FOR GO

Year of the Environment



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL





Careers at Ashford Designer Outlet

View all local employment opportunities at ashforddesigneroutlet.com/careers



Welcome

Since the last issue, nearly 600 people have contacted us by email and post to participate in our Picturehouse and Snowdogs competitions and to take part in our readers' survey – see page 4 for the results. This represents an amazing response by the people of Ashford, and is clear proof that our residents have taken *Ashford For You* to their hearts and are keen to engage with their own borough magazine.

A number of important developments and projects grabbed the headlines in 2018 – the opening of our Elwick Place cinema, hotel and leisure complex being one of them – and 2019 promises to be an equally momentous year. You can find out more about what lies ahead in this edition.

And while investment in new bricks and mortar schemes are vital to our future prosperity, we never lose sight of the positive impact that community life has for all of us. This is celebrated in a four page special feature on community centres and village hubs.

Enjoy reading *Ashford For You* and keep sending us your views and ideas.

Tracy Kerly

Tracy Kerly
Chief executive, Ashford Borough Council

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GLOBE ON TOUR



SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE



In association with
Canterbury Festival

Chilham Castle

FRIDAY 17 MAY – SUNDAY 19 MAY

The Comedy of Errors

Pericles

Twelfth Night

shakespearesglobe.com/chilham



Residents give magazine a big thumbs up

In our last edition we asked readers for their views on *Ashford For You* magazine. The overall feedback has been really positive, with residents feeling more informed with what is going on in the borough and kept up to date with what the council is doing.

- OVER 90%** strongly agreed or agree to some extent the magazine keeps residents up to date
- 88%** think *Ashford For You* keeps residents very or quite well informed
- 88%** also feel better informed since the introduction of the magazine

We also received some great ideas from readers for future features so keep an eye out in forthcoming editions.



The Daily Telegraph

Hold the front page!

Ashford has continued to make the headlines in the national press for all the right reasons. In recent months there have been positive articles in the *Sunday Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Evening Standard*, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* and *The Economist*.

A few days before Christmas, Ashford Borough Council was approached by the London correspondent of the *New York Times*, who wanted an interview about our reported economic success. He saw first-hand what the council is doing to boost the local economy. And as we went to press a European news broadcaster was working on its own feature about "boom town Ashford".

To read these articles in full visit: <https://news.ashford.gov.uk/news>



The Guardian



Snowdogs auction raises £142,000

Snowdogs Discover Ashford, the hugely popular public art trail brought to the town by Ashford Borough Council, Wild in Art and Pilgrims Hospices, finished on a high in December – raising £142,000 for Pilgrims Hospices with a glamorous gala auction.

In a final farewell, an auction was held at Ashford International Hotel, with celebrity TV auctioneer and hosts Michael Hogben and Alison Chapman at the helm as local businesses and residents clamoured for their favourite dog.

Ashford Borough Council acquired three of the coveted canines, Harey Hound, Made in Ash-Hound and Vincent van Pooch, and have been gifted a further three – Dotty, Snowbrador and Harry Kanine. All have now returned to the borough so that residents can continue to enjoy the magic of the trail for years to come.

And the good news doesn't end there – two of the other popular pooches are also back, as Socks and the newly named Elwick (formerly My Very Best Jumper) have found new homes in County Square and the Ashford Picturehouse.

Watch out for appearances from the council's dogs at future events across the borough!



Council introduces bursary scheme

Do you want to go to university or college but are worried about the costs? Would you like to gain experience in your chosen field? If you are a local resident looking to go on to further education after school or college then the council's work placement and bursary scheme could be for you. You could get paid work experience as well as up to £3,000 per year throughout your chosen degree or qualification. One placement is available each year. See www.ashford.gov.uk/workplacement

Are you eligible for council tax help?

You can make a claim for council tax support, which is a means-tested benefit, if you own your home (either outright or you have a mortgage), or you rent your home; you are the person whose name is on the council tax bill; you are on a low income; or you are 18 years of age.

If you are jointly responsible for council tax Ashford Borough Council can help pay your share of the bill. You can apply for council tax support by submitting an online claim form www.ashford.gov.uk/benefits-and-council-tax/benefits/claiming-benefits/claiming-council-tax-support/

You can also estimate your entitlement to council tax support using our online benefits calculator www.ashford.gov.uk/benefits-calculator

You will not be entitled to any council tax support if you are not responsible for paying the council tax bill; you are a full-time student; either you, or your partner, or both of you together, have more than £10,000 in savings or £16,000 for pension age claimants; you are an asylum seeker, unless you've been given refugee status or indefinite or exceptional leave to remain in the UK; or you have been admitted to the UK on the condition that you have 'no recourse to public funds'.



Lights, camera ASHFORD!

Now showing... Elwick Place opens for business

The waiting is over – our much-anticipated new cinema, hotel and leisure complex at Elwick Place is open and crowds have been flocking to the stunning Ashford Picturehouse, either to watch the latest movie in luxurious surroundings or to enjoy a meal and a drink in the spacious restaurant bar. The £75m Elwick Place scheme has been developed by Stanhope PLC and funded by Ashford Borough Council.

The eye-catching gold mesh panels which adorn the façade of the town centre cinema might give the impression that this ultra-modern entertainment palace is fit for a King but it is a statue in honour of a revered Queen which dominates the public plaza at Elwick Place.

The complex received the Royal seal of approval when members of the Romanian royal family visited Ashford to unveil the two metre tall bronze statue of Queen Marie – a British Princess, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, who was born and lived right here at Eastwell Park in Ashford before marrying into the Romanian royal family.

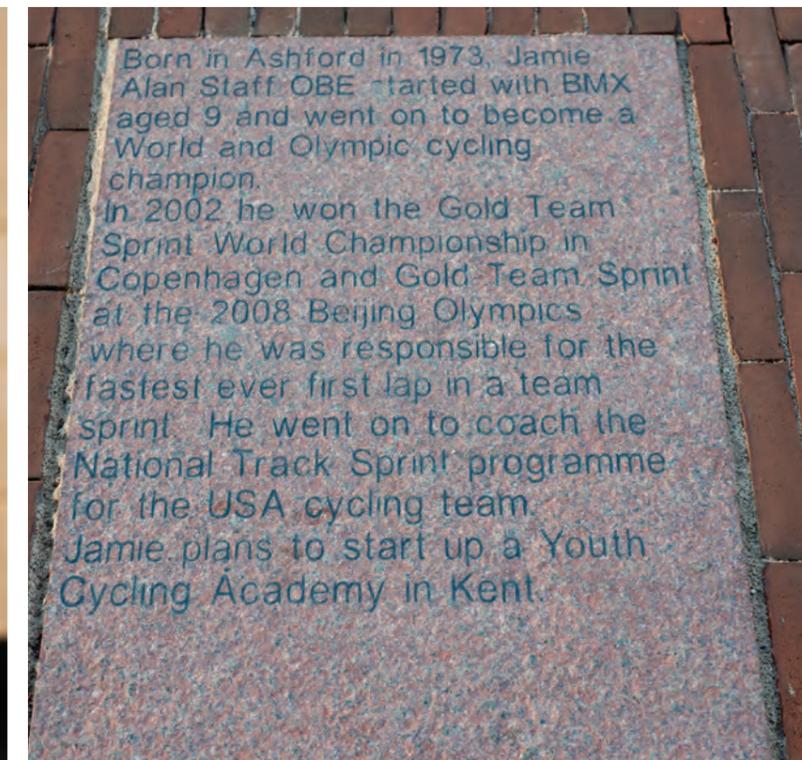
The statue is alongside the old market gateposts which guarded the entrance to the Elwick Road market for

more than 100 years before being removed around 1970. Now lovingly restored to their original condition, the posts support a fixed gate which stands as a piece of contemporary artwork.

Visitors have also been taking great delight in discovering the Elwick Etchings – an innovative public arts initiative commissioned by developer Stanhope PLC and delivered by Kent creative company Strange Cargo. The memories of 100 Ashfordians are now engraved on granite paving slabs dotted around the site for generations to come to enjoy.

Another well-known national brand has opened in Elwick Place – Travelodge started welcoming guests just before Christmas and its town centre location makes it ideally placed to take advantage of the expected growth in visitors to Ashford in the years ahead.

And for anyone keen on a selfie, don't miss out on getting your photo taken in one of three super-sized antique-style golden photo frames in front of the entrance to the six-screen cinema. It's your chance to get in the frame at Elwick Place! Keep up to date at www.elwickplace.com.



Big year ahead

Everyone agrees that 2018 was a bumper year for exciting developments in Ashford with the first occupants taking up office space in the impressive looking Commercial Quarter, the magical Snowdogs art trail capturing the hearts of visitors young and old, the arrival of an Aldi superstore, and the opening of Elwick Place leisure complex, including the new boutique Picturehouse cinema.

Not to be outdone, 2019 is already shaping up to go one better with the Curious Brewery opening in the spring, the Designer Outlet extension ready to welcome bargain hungry shoppers in the autumn, plans to transform some industrial buildings close to the International station into a chic food and drink destination, as well as various other developments on the horizon.

The pace of economic growth continues to accelerate in Ashford with nearly £670m being invested across the borough, of which £520m is helping to change the skyline of the town centre.

Brewing success

The arrival of a 1.6 acre brewery experience – The Curious Brewery from English Wines expert, Chapel Down – will enable it to grow its domestic and international distribution and contribute to the borough's strong tourism offer.

Curious Brewery is owned by Chapel Down Group, one of the UK's most exciting drinks companies and the eponymous owner of Chapel Down wines, sparkling wines and spirits.

The multi-million pound project, state-of-the art, custom-built brewery also includes a shop, bar, restaurant and hosting area for tours. The new Curious Brewery will create dozens of jobs and is sure to become a significant new focal point and attraction for the town.



€90m Outlet expansion

McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Ashford is significantly expanding, adding 100,000 sq ft of retail space and creating over 500 jobs through the introduction of 50 new luxury and premium brands.

The expansion will also see an exciting new 'Garden of England' themed playground, new Food Piazza, dedicated events space, Changing Places facility and Europe's largest living wall added to the centre.

The centre currently welcomes 3.6m visitors per year, which they anticipate to rise to around five million per year over the next five years.

The expansion will create a flagship shopping and leisure destination in the south east, providing a complementary offer to our town centre that drives long-term economic benefits for Ashford.



The Coachworks

Ashford Borough Council is working with award-winning Carl Turner Architects on adapting a collection of disused industrial buildings into a mixed-use campus providing a cool food and drink destination, flexible indoor/outdoor event space and co-working space aimed at start-up firms. Carl Turner designed and co-founded projects like Pop Brixton and Peckham Levels, which have seen areas of London transformed into popular leisure and workspaces. The firm will lease and run The Coachworks on behalf of the council.

This will see several industrial buildings close to the station including the former Ashford Youth Theatre and Corn Store, converted into a vibrant space providing new work and leisure uses.

Junction 10a shaping up

Rapid progress is being made on constructing the new £104m junction at J10a of the M20. The long-awaited junction is being built 700 metres south east of the existing J10 and promises to be a catalyst for further economic and commercial development, providing much-needed extra transport capacity.

The junction – the third to serve Ashford – is expected to be open to traffic before the year end.

New look for Victoria Way

As well as the eye-catching Curious Brewery and visitor centre and 18,500 sq ft Aldi superstore, there is plenty going on along Victoria Way.

Victoria Point will see an upmarket 120 bed hotel, 216 apartments and three retail units built while the former Powergen brownfield site is making way for Riverside Park, which is home to 246 apartments and 26 townhouses.



ASHFORD'S VISITOR ECONOMY IS WORTH
£293m

JOBS SUPPORTED BY TOURISM CLOSE TO **5,800**

10% OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE BOROUGH

£670m INVESTED IN ASHFORD

1.6 ACRE BREWERY SITE

4,000 BOTTLES KEGGED PER HOUR

100,000 SQ FT OUTLET EXTENSION

50 NEW PREMIUM BRANDS

6 NEW RESTAURANTS AND CAFES

725 ADDITIONAL PARKING SPACES



“Boom town Ashford” is a newspaper headline that could easily be used to describe the borough as we continue to reap the benefits of economic development and record levels of investment in 2019.

Keeping you informed...

With the rapid growth in online communications and social media channels, it's never been easier to contact Ashford Borough Council and to keep your finger on the pulse of what we are doing.

 **Your Ashford app**
Download it via Google Play or the App Store

Are you trying to contact us? Have you spotted something in the borough that needs tidying up? Maybe your bin wasn't collected when it was due to be? By using the Your Ashford app, you can easily get in touch and report these types of incidents directly to us, even when you're out and about!

 **News Hub**
news.ashford.gov.uk

You'll find all the latest news, as well as blogs and council-led or supported events, so it's a great way to keep up to date with local happenings – you can even watch our latest video content, which is also on our YouTube channel, plus it can all be shared via your social media feed too.

 **Twitter**
[ashfordcouncil](https://twitter.com/ashfordcouncil)

Need the latest news? Twitter's the place for you! We're grateful to the many businesses and residents who tag us on here so that we're able to share more information throughout the borough, so please don't stop!

 **Facebook**
[ashfordboroughcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/ashfordboroughcouncil)

One of the most popular channels used by residents as it's a great way to share the latest news using words, images, videos and more, plus you can engage directly with us by sharing your views and asking questions. Also, make sure you join our Facebook group 'Residents of Ashford'. It's a place for residents to engage, share and chat while finding out what's happening in the borough.

 **LinkedIn**
[company/ashford-borough-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ashford-borough-council)

The ideal channel for provision of the latest business-related news in order to raise awareness of what the council does and how it can help with the continuing development of the local economy.

 **Instagram**
[ashfordbc](https://www.instagram.com/ashfordbc)

The place to go for beautiful imagery and to share all the hidden gems that others might not be aware of. Don't forget to tag us when you're out and about, as we love to see and share your pictures so that everyone can see the delights of the borough!

Community lifelines

Ashford is rightly proud of its status as Kent's best location for business, and with a population expected to expand to around 150,000 by 2030 (forecast based on the Local Plan), Ashford is justifiably seen as one of the fastest-growing and most vibrant towns in the South East.

As impressive as these facts are, this ongoing investment in bricks and mortar is only one part of the success story. The community ties that bind us together are equally as important to the wellbeing and happiness of the 127,000-plus people who live in the borough. Community centres and village halls – together with the community support groups and charities and volunteers who use them – are vital cogs in our society, and in this issue of *Ashford For You* we celebrate their role in supporting local people and doing so much to bind our communities together...



Pictured above: Tenterden Community Hub and Tenterden Social Hub (top left)

Access for all is the priority

For more than 20 years the Ashford Access Group has been representing the interests of people with a range of physical and other disabilities in the region. It is led by a committee of hard-working and dedicated volunteers, many of whom understand the needs of the disabled, either through their own families or experience in the field of disability.

Over the years the Group has participated in public consultations and planning applications on a range of issues and projects in Ashford, including the introduction of the shared space road scheme in Elwick Road, public realm improvement works in Dover Place and the development of the Elwick Place cinema, hotel and leisure complex.

The Group gives a voice to people who have visual and physical impairments, and its work aims to ensure that the access needs for everyone in society is taken into account when new buildings, offices, shopping centres and more are being planned.

While the committee works hard to keep up to date with legal, building and planning issues and regulations, it has acted as an advisory body to the William Harvey hospital and has a close working relationship with Ashford Borough Council. The committee, which meets at the Civic Centre each quarter, is always looking for new recruits.

Email Chairman **Michael Cloughton** at michael.cloughton@ntlworld.com



Wye's village hall welcomed back

A village hall can be a vital cog in the community, a place where like-minded locals can come together. Wye village hall is no exception with an array of clubs hosting activities for all age groups.

For the village's younger residents there's Musical Fun Time, Brownies and Scouts, while a Senior Table Tennis Club is popular with the older generation. Alongside classes such as pilates and fitsteps, there are groups for gardeners and whist lovers as well as the WI and RAF Association.

Originally built in 1938, Wye village hall had seen better days but thanks to a proactive project team, led by David Reece, the hall has recently undergone a renovation project, reopening in November 2018.

Building work included a replacement roof and the creation of an extra meeting room and storage space along with a new PA system, sound proofing and improvements to the car park. The £800,000 project received funding support from a number of sources including Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council, Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council, The Big Lottery Fund, the European Agricultural Development Fund and BIFFA Award, and local benefactor Frank Brake.

For the launch the project team had their photo taken in the same place as the original 1938 team with many villagers turning up to see patrons Jane Loudon, Etienne Pradier and MP Damian Green cut the ribbon at the Open Day.

To find out more about the hall and what activities are available visit

<http://wyevillagehall.wixsite.com/wyevillagehall> or email wyevillagehall@gmail.com

Make a difference today...

Want to make a difference? Why not consider becoming a trustee with Carers' Support, Ashford, and make a positive change to the lives of unpaid carers. The charity, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary year, currently supports more than 1,000 carers in Ashford alone with a wide variety of services.

Being a trustee gives you the opportunity to provide support to a CEO leading an organisation that is making a real difference to unpaid carers and society as a whole. You can contribute your skills and expertise to a cause that is important

Centre goes from strength to strength

The distinctive Singleton Environment Centre opened in 2008 and is thriving under new management. As it approaches its first anniversary under the watchful eye of Singleton Spaces, a trust set up by Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council to oversee the day to day operations, business continues to grow.



The Trust has taken on new staff, has expanded the range of activities on offer and the popular onsite Footprints cafe is now open seven days per week.

The eco-friendly sustainably-built centre comprises meeting rooms, workshop areas, a café and office facilities within beautifully landscaped grounds situated in a tranquil setting adjoining 15 hectares of woodland, designed and managed by the local community, with stunning views and thriving wildlife.

Singleton Spaces' ambition is to engage with the public to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the environment and educate them in how their actions can have both a positive and negative effect.

Chairman of Great Chart with Singleton Parish Council, Ian McClintock, said: "We owe a debt of thanks to the Singleton Spaces trustees and staff, who have worked exceedingly hard to make the first year a success, with the SEC continuing to expand the activities at the centre for the benefit of the community, both local and further away."

For more information about the Singleton Spaces Trust and the Singleton Environment Centre visit www.singletonenvironmentcentre.org.uk

to you, while playing a fundamental role in the strategic development of the organisation. You can also gain valuable experience and learn new skills within a leadership role.

Being a trustee means challenging yourself, by applying your skills in a different environment. You can also gain non-executive board experience, while learning from other trustees and gaining new insights from seeing how others respond to situations and make decisions. To find out more call 01233 664393 or email: admin@carers-ashford.org.uk

Connecting with Repton

Residents in the fast-expanding Repton area of Ashford can now enjoy a wealth of new facilities after Repton Connect Community Centre opened its doors last October.

The new community facility includes two meeting rooms, a main hall and large kitchen space, as well as a multi-use games area and on-site parking.

The centre is already thriving, and has quickly become home to a host of clubs, educational courses, cooking workshops, social events and lots more.

Ashford Borough Council has led this project as part of its commitment to improving community and youth facilities across the borough, working alongside the newly-formed Repton Community Trust.

For more updates, visit the Repton Connect website at www.reptonct.uk or follow them on Facebook @reptonCT, Twitter @reptonCT or Instagram @reptonct.



40 years of supporting Ashford

Ashford Volunteer Centre is celebrating 40 years of supporting local people to make a difference by volunteering.



An independent registered charity, Ashford Volunteer Centre, bridges the gap helping those who wish to volunteer to find opportunities and supporting local organisations seeking volunteers.

Ashford Volunteer Centre changes lives as it continues to support the more vulnerable in our society. And the positive impact AVC has is summed up by this one testimonial:

"It's all thanks to you. You've given me the confidence by believing in me. Honestly I wouldn't be doing the things I am, had I not come to the Volunteering workshop! I look forward to the future."

NM, Young mum, March 2018

The range of opportunities on offer includes a one-to-one befriending service for adults over 50+ who are isolated and lonely, and a youth volunteering project called the 'Can Do Crew' for those aged between 16 to 25 to develop their skills and self-confidence. AVC also runs a volunteer car scheme enabling people who find it difficult to use transport to attend health appointments, volunteer skills and self-esteem courses and much more.

To mark its 40th anniversary year, the charity is keen to hear from anyone who may have been involved with Ashford Volunteer Centre, in its various guises, back to 1978. This might have been volunteering,

staff, directors or simply attended events or utilising the team to find volunteers for your service. All stories and pictures greatly welcomed. For more information or to discuss further please email history@ashfordvc.org.uk

Moving forward the Volunteer Centre has recently developed a Cancer café, a Games Club and will be launching Men in Sheds and Time banking projects in 2019.

You can find more details on volunteering opportunities at <https://ashfordvc.org.uk/> or call them on 01233 665535 or email contact@ashfordvc.org.uk

Two organisations in Tenterden focus on helping those in need...

Community Hub

The Tenterden Community Hub has helped many people since it launched in January 2015, as a charity focused on supporting local residents.

The Hub operates a walk-in service on Friday mornings between 10am-12noon, with other days/times/venues by appointment. It provides a warm welcome to all and is recognised as being a central place of safety.

The main objectives of the Tenterden Community Hub are to provide a public benefit, in particular but not limited, to people living within a 20 mile radius of Tenterden. It seeks to relieve financial hardship and distress of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability or other disadvantage through the provision of grants, goods and services and by educating the public in the subject of money matters and debt and personal finance management.

Two of the main activities are a listening ear, which supports anyone in need of help, working in confidence to understand any personal problems and then agree the best way forward to provide a solution, and the provision of a community bank, by working in co-operation with Kent Savers Credit Union to provide access to low cost loans and secure savings for your money.



From left to right are Chris Northen, Julia Bampton and Mike Stephens.

HOW TO MAKE CONTACT...

Tenterden Community Hub is based at St Mildred's Church Hall Meeting Rooms (use the side entrance), St Mildred's Church Hall, Church Road, Tenterden TN30 6AT. Call 01580 766155 or email info@tenterdencommunityhub.co.uk

Social Hub

This registered charity was previously known as the Tenterden & District Day Centre. It provides core activities to ensure that its members maintain their independence through informed choices while retaining their individuality, dignity, privacy and confidentiality in a safe, friendly, happy environment through the provision of social interaction, entertainment, quality meals and transport.

For anyone over 60, Sixty Plus provides a place for those in the community to meet in a supportive social environment, have lunch, use the facilities and join in daily activities. It has up to 30 regular members every weekday, with further spaces for more members and space for people to drop in for lunch.

Home Help is an agency, based within the Hub, providing domestic help, support and independent living services for older people and those with a disability. The aim is to support them to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

The Disability Team is based at the Social Hub, where clients can meet friends and other people in a similar situation. Currently serving more than 50 regular members, the Hub runs trips and activities, providing a vital service to the local community. The disability services are open to all adults with a disability aged 18+.

The Meal Club delivers two-course hot lunches direct to people in their own homes. The meals are freshly made in their own kitchens using locally sourced produce where possible. A drop off tea-time sandwich service is also available for Meal Club customers. Clients do not have to be members attending the Social Hub to receive this service.

Designed for those aged 50 and over, the information service provides assistance with benefits maximisation (including assistance with form filling). It's a free to access service and the Information, Advice and Advocacy Manager holds a drop-in clinic at the Hub every Wednesday.

Other Social Hub services are available, so visit www.tenterdendaycentre.co.uk for further details.

HOW TO MAKE CONTACT...

Tenterden Social Hub, Church Road, Tenterden TN30 6AT. Call 01580 762882 or email daycentre@tenterdendaycentre.co.uk

Democracy in action

In the last of our series of articles about May's local elections, we round up the main changes facing voters in the borough...



On Thursday 2 May some Ashfordians will be voting for one borough councillor instead of the usual two and vice versa. Some will be voting in new borough wards – for example Repton and Bircholt – and some at a different polling station than they are used to.

For some people, their arrangements may be unchanged from previous council elections. For others, the trip to cast your vote in May, and in all future elections to Ashford Borough Council, is changing following a review aimed at tackling electoral inequality where some borough councillors represent many more – or many fewer – voters than some of their fellow members on the same authority.

Ashford is the only district in Kent where councillor numbers are increasing, reflecting rapid population growth – according to forecasts in the Local Plan, our population is expected to soar from 127,500 in 2017 to around 150,000 by 2030.

Ward boundaries have been redrawn, meaning some streets now fall into new wards, and people will need to attend different polling stations.

For example, residents of Bybrook ward who previously voted at Bockhanger Community Centre and the Conningbrook Hotel will now vote at St Mary's Community Centre and Spearpoint Pavillion.

The wards returning two members are Aylesford & East Stour, Beaver, Furley, Repton, Victoria, Weald Central, Weald South and Willesborough.

The rapid house building seen in Ashford has resulted in the creation of new wards, including Kingsnorth Village and Bridgefield, and also Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry.

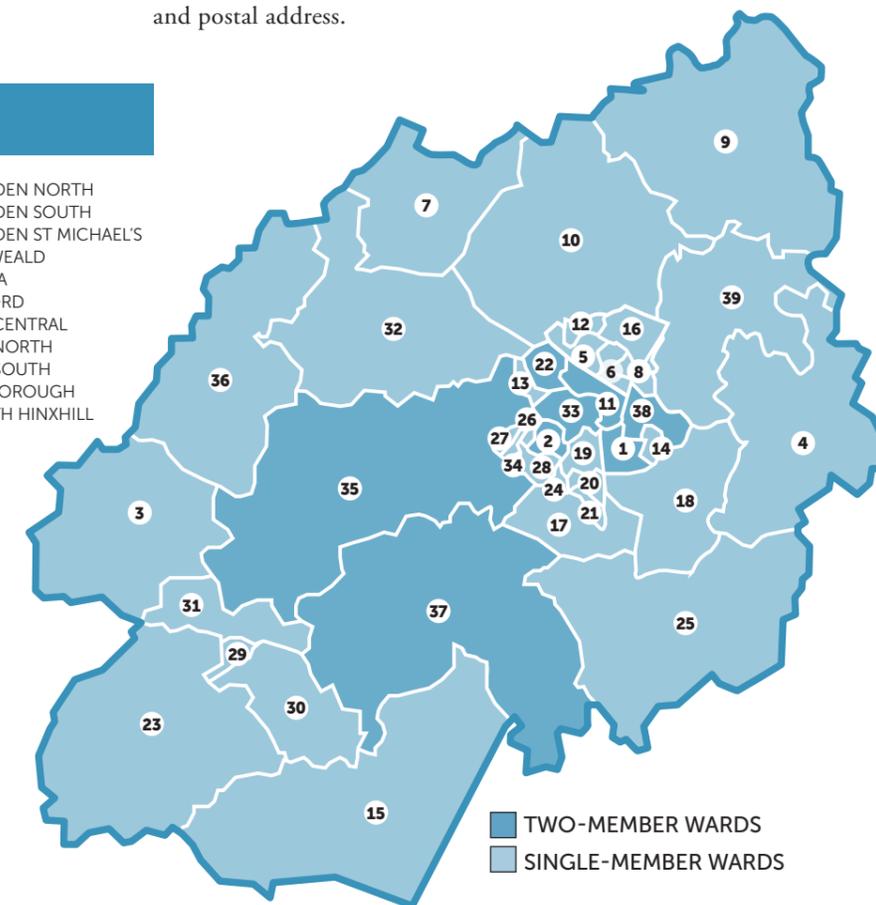
Polling cards will be sent to every eligible registered elector in the district four weeks before polling day on 2 May.

A polling station finder will be available on the Ashford Borough Council website from the end of March, allowing readers to locate your designated polling station using your postcode and postal address.

Where is your ward?

MAP KEY

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. AYLESFORD & EAST STOUR | 29. TENTERDEN NORTH |
| 2. BEAVER | 30. TENTERDEN SOUTH |
| 3. BIDDENDEN | 31. TENTERDEN ST MICHAEL'S |
| 4. BIRCHOLT | 32. UPPER WEALD |
| 5. BOCKHANGER | 33. VICTORIA |
| 6. BYBROOK | 34. WASHFORD |
| 7. CHARING | 35. WEALD CENTRAL |
| 8. CONNINGBROOK & LITTLE BURTON FARM | 36. WEALD NORTH |
| 9. DOWNS NORTH | 37. WEALD SOUTH |
| 10. DOWNS WEST | 38. WILLESBOROUGH |
| 11. FURLEY | 39. WYE WITH HINXHILL |
| 12. GOAT LEES | |
| 13. GODINTON | |
| 14. HIGHFIELD | |
| 15. ISLE OF OXNEY | |
| 16. KENNINGTON | |
| 17. KINGSNORTH VILLAGE AND BRIDGEFIELD | |
| 18. MERSHAM, SEVINGTON SOUTH WITH FINBERRY | |
| 19. NORMAN | |
| 20. PARK FARM NORTH | |
| 21. PARK FARM SOUTH | |
| 22. REPTON | |
| 23. ROLVENDEN & TENTERDEN WEST | |
| 24. ROMAN | |
| 25. SAXON SHORE | |
| 26. SINGLETON EAST | |
| 27. SINGLETON WEST | |
| 28. STANHOPE | |



2019 Year of the Environment

In the aftermath of Blue Planet 2, the UK experienced 'The David Attenborough Effect'. Plastic was in the news frequently, selected coffee shops started charging for disposable cups and bars started switching to paper straws.

Last year, the government published its 25 Year Environment Plan, committing to creating the first generation to leave our surroundings in a better state than we found it. Now 2019 has been entitled the 'Year of the Environment' or the 'Year of Green Action', providing an opportunity for people from all backgrounds to take action to improve the planet.

Ashford Borough Council is excited to deliver various events, campaigns and initiatives throughout the year to support the environment.

If we're to improve the environment over the next 25 years, action by everyone is vital. Some of you already work hard and we want to celebrate your accomplishments by holding an Achievement Awards Ceremony. Do you know an environmental champion, local hero or local eco-warrior? If so, we want you to nominate them. They can be your family, friend, neighbour, teacher or student - anyone who goes out of their way to make a difference.

Nominations can be submitted online from 1 March at www.ashford.gov.uk/nominateme

Successful nominees will be invited to participate in the Achievement Awards Ceremony, which will be held by the Mayor. Lots more events will be taking place in the coming months so keep an eye out for more details.

The Great British Spring Clean



The Great British Spring Clean is back and we aim to make it bigger and better than ever before! Now taking place for a whole month (22 March - 23 April), we want Ashford residents to join forces so we can stage litter picks every weekend.

The council will be holding its own litter picks and encourages volunteers to come along. We also want as many villages and community groups to do the same - if you're interested in joining us, email street.scene@ashford.gov.uk



Champion recyclers

When it comes to recycling Ashford tops the league in Kent for the fourth year in a row. A Defra report shows that we retain top spot for both highest percentage of household waste recycled and composted, and for the lowest residual waste tonnages per household. Ashford is now 27th in the country for recycling - up from 35th place last year - and 10th place for the amount of residual waste produced per household, an incredible achievement by residents. Ashford's garden waste recycling service continues to grow and has more than 15,400 customers, increasing by nearly 1,000 new customers in the past year.



Beehive 'Where community happens and lives are changed'

The Beehive is the brainchild of Nic (a senior Pastor at Ashford Vineyard Church) and Becca. It began in 2017, as a pop-up shop in Ashford town centre and has since become a permanent fixture at 2 North Street, Ashford.

Born from Nic's desire to create a boutique shopping experience for women who couldn't afford clothing and Becca's vision of a community hub, The Beehive provides both paying customers and referred women with the very same boutique experience. The only difference is that when the clothes are scanned into the till, the referred women's total clocks up to £0!

The Beehive say that their aim is to ensure that every woman who enters the shop is made to feel beautiful and valued. As well as being a community hub, The Beehive, with its good quality second hand clothing, encourages sustainable practices and offers pre-loved clothes a chance to be loved once again.



Find out more about The Beehive at www.beehiveashford.com

 BeehiveAshford
 beehiveashford



Bare Bazaar 'Food but nude'

We are now more aware than ever of the damaging effects our consumption of single use plastics are having on our planet and this has led to a rise in people looking to make more sustainable choices. Bare Bazaar was set up in Ashford to provide a way in which customers could make those choices without compromising on safety, quality or affordability.

Kati launched Bare Bazaar when she became frustrated at being unable to avoid unnecessary plastic when she shopped. She soon discovered she wasn't the only one with this problem and so Bare Bazaar made its debut at Ashford Farmers' Market in July 2018, and it received an overwhelmingly positive response.

Bare Bazaar's aim is to provide plastic-free solutions to your everyday shopping needs, putting the power in the customer's hands to say no to plastic. As the people of Ashford have shown such a high level of support for this sustainable way of shopping, Bare Bazaar now has a pop-up shop on Fridays and Saturdays located in Made in Ashford, Park Mall shopping centre.

Find out more about Bare Bazaar at barebazaar.co.uk

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Celebrating Ashford's proud military heritage

The 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice at the end of the First World War resulted in commemorations befitting of this historical milestone right across the borough of Ashford...

Ashford has long had a rich military heritage; something that was honoured through the extensive commemorative events held in 2018. From the *Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace 14-18* exhibition in the Memorial Gardens, to the silent soldiers, Mark IV floral tank tribute on Vicarage Lane and all of the red-themed planting across the borough, through to the unveiling of the new Civic Beacon and the extraordinary *Battle's Over: A Nation's Tribute* event – complete with Ashford's Poppy Tribute – remembering the borough's connections to the war was an important element of all that took place in 2018.

But our ties with the military and remembering Ashford's military heritage extend far beyond our Remembrance Day commemorations. Each year, we work with several key organisations to continue to support and honour our connections to the Armed Forces.

Here's how we support these commitments:

The Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant was first introduced in 2011 with a focus on helping the Armed Forces Community have the same access to government and commercial services as the public. Essentially, it is a promise from the nation to those who serve, ensuring that they are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives.

This support is provided in a number of areas, including education and family well-being, having a home, starting a new career, access to healthcare, financial assistance and discounted

services. The covenant supports serving personnel, service leavers, veterans and their families, and is fulfilled by the different groups that have committed to making a difference. These include:

- Central government
- Single services
- Businesses of all sizes
- Local government
- Charities
- Communities
- Cadet forces and their adult volunteers

How do we work with the Armed Forces Covenant?

On 10 May 2014, the borough of Ashford marked its whole-hearted commitment to supporting servicemen and women, their families, reservists and veterans with a special signing of the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

The Covenant was co-signed by Major Phil Linehan, Officer Commanding for the 133 Field Company of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), part of 103 Battalion of the REME based at the Army Reserve Centre on Sir Henry Brackenbury Road, as well as representatives from the voluntary and community sector.

Our Armed Forces Covenant exists to encourage support for the Armed Forces community in Ashford and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces community.



Have Your Say

Do you have any suggestions on how we could develop the Ashford Borough Armed Forces Covenant? We are committed to finding ways to best serve the local Armed Forces community and welcome any feedback on the work you think we should be looking at. Contact our Armed Forces Champion by emailing communitycovenant@ashford.gov.uk

Locally, we work with the Armed Forces Covenant to provide social housing support, assist with school applications for children within Armed Forces families who move to the UK at short notice, help with jobs and training, and provide a link to extra welfare and financial support from other Armed Forces associations.

We also work to encourage Ashford businesses, community groups and individuals to sign up to the Covenant and pledge their support to the Armed Forces community. You can find more information about the Armed Forces Covenant and how we work with them here:

www.ashford.gov.uk/support-for-the-armed-forces

Ashford's Poppy Tribute and our work with SSAFA

Over the years, we have also worked closely with the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) to support our local veterans by fundraising for the local Kent branch. Much like the Armed Forces Covenant, SSAFA works to ensure that the needs of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families are met in an appropriate and timely way. Through these charitable contributions, the Ashford community has continued to provide vital funding for those serving and ex-service personnel who need it most.

Most recently, we worked with SSAFA on the advent of Ashford's Poppy Tribute – a stunning display of 3,000 metal poppies around the Civic Beacon in North Park, as part of the *Battle's Over: A Nation's Tribute* event. **All 3,000 of the poppies were sold, raising £4,950 for SSAFA's Ashford branch.**

How has the money raised from Ashford's Poppy Tribute been used?

Gary Winham, Divisional Secretary from the Kent branch of SSAFA, explains: "We received the money raised from Ashford's Poppy Tribute in December, and part of it has already been put to good use to help veterans living in Ashford.

"We have been able to use part of the money, in conjunction with other contributions, to purchase a special bed for an ex-serviceman injured in Iraq, who because of his injuries, has been obliged to sleep on the floor. We have been able to help another veteran to avoid homelessness when he was threatened with eviction, and we have also been able to assist the families of two soldiers previously serving with the Brigade of Gurkhas who have now retired and decided to settle in Ashford.

"We will continue to identify and assist worthy cases in the Ashford borough during 2019."

What's On



In this issue our What's On pages have been taken over by two of our Visitor Information Centre team, giving their personal suggestions for great places to visit...

Tracey McKeen (Tourism Operations Officer)

One of the days out I really enjoyed last year was the Tenterden wine trail as I got to spend a leisurely day in the heart of the Kent countryside discovering the locally produced fine wines and excellent ales our borough has to offer.

Readers should keep an eye out for the Big Cat Sanctuary Open Days this year. Tickets are selling out fast so don't miss out. If you're lucky enough to snag a ticket you may get to see Maya the Jaguar and Willow the Cheetah stars of the BBC's 2018 documentary *Big Cats about the House*.

Who doesn't love afternoon tea? It's a British institution! Frasers at Egerton is set in our beautiful countryside and serves up a delicious traditional tea. If you're celebrating a special occasion you can also 'upgrade' with the addition of a glass of Prosecco or Champagne.

This spring you definitely don't want to miss the fabulous bluebell display at Hole Park, Rolvenden



– there's even a 'bluebell barometer' on their website (www.holepark.com) so you can plan your visit for when they're at their peak.

Live music lovers should head to Revelation Ashford, right in the heart of the town. The intimate venue plays host to household names such as Steeleye Span (13 April 2019) and also supports home-grown artists from all genres.

Ann Harrison (Visitor Information Assistant)

A bit of retail therapy always makes us feel better and with around 70 stores, including a great selection of designer brands, at the Ashford Designer Outlet you'll be sure to snap up a bargain or two! If you need refreshments, how about Pizza Express, Patisserie Valerie, Café Nero – so much choice, you won't go hungry.

Looking to get active? The Stour Centre has facilities for everyone. There's a 25m main pool, a teaching pool, leisure pool with flumes and a raging river. If you want something more fast paced, Contours Health Club offers cardio and resistance equipment and a free weights area.

Steam through the beautiful High Weald countryside on the Kent and East Sussex Railway. The main station located in the charming town of Tenterden will take you along the winding track to Bodiam. Here you will find the beautiful National Trust property Bodiam Castle and if you show your train ticket you will receive an entrance discount into the castle.

If you're not quite sure what you are looking for pop in to the Visitor Information Centre, (located in Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road) for some inspiration. There is a great selection of literature, maps and walking publications, plus a wonderful choice of gifts and souvenirs.

Visit: www.visit.ashfordandtenterden.co.uk

Date for your diary!

It's back! We can now reveal that Create Festival 2019 will be taking place on **Saturday 20 July** in the usual place, Victoria Park. Headline acts for the 24th annual event are yet to be announced, so keep an eye on our social media channels (see page 10) to see who will be rocking the stage this year. Create Platform will also be back in the week leading up to the festival.



For more information on all these suggestions, visit www.visitashfordandtenterden.co.uk where you'll find venue opening dates and times and links to their websites.

2019 Celebrations

Three cheers at Biddenden Vineyard

Celebrating 50 years in 2019, Biddenden Vineyards is Kent's original commercial vineyard, proudly family run with the second and third generation of the Barnes family managing the estate.

Originally home to a 40 acre apple orchard, the Barnes family started to consider diversifying the farm in the late 1960s as apple prices began to decline. After listening to a feature on the BBC's *Woman's Hour* programme about English vineyards being replanted, Mrs. Barnes was inspired to turn to viticulture. In 1969, one third of an acre of vines was planted and Biddenden Vineyards was born.

Today the single estate vineyard spans 23 acres of gentle south facing slopes in a sheltered valley, just outside Biddenden. No fewer than 11 different grape varieties are grown to produce award-winning White, Rosé, Red and Sparkling English wines.

From the first Biddenden wine, which was bottled in 1972, production has now grown to around 80,000 bottles per year. All vine work on the estate is still carried out by hand, including pruning, canopy management and picking, with harvest running from mid to late September right through to November.

The vineyard is open to visitors throughout the year with free admission and tastings and private tours may be booked for a more personal experience.

Visit: www.biddendenvineyards.com



150 up at Willesborough Windmill

This year Willesborough Windmill is 150 years old. Built in 1869 by the Cornes family who owned other mills and businesses in the Ashford area, it was constructed by John Hill in his yard in North Street and then transported in sections to Willesborough.

The mill worked grinding bread flour and animal meal throughout the latter years of the 19th century and up until the 1920s, when it was superseded by modern mills in the town such as Pledge's. By the 1930s it was only grinding animal feed and used as a store and sack repair base. During the 1950s to protect the building it was listed Grade 2* and in the 1960s it was sold to a local businessman who used it as a home and a base for his organ repair business.

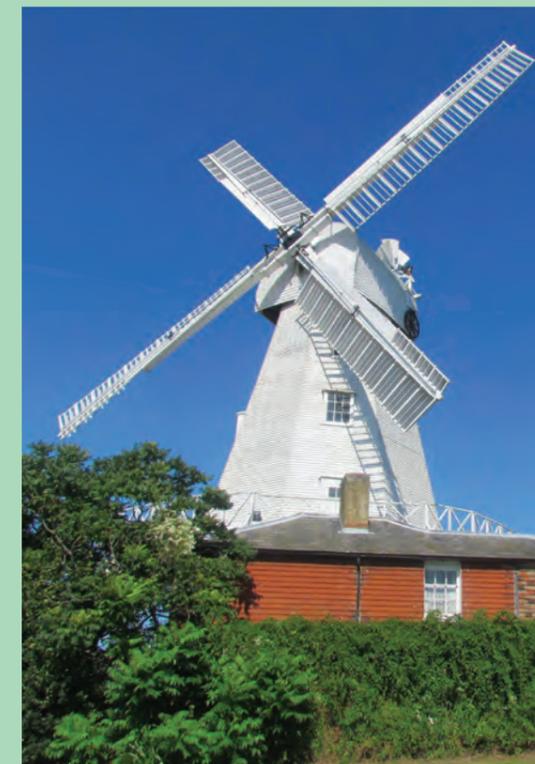
By the 1980s it had fallen into disrepair and was compulsorily purchased by Ashford Borough Council who set about a comprehensive repair of the building. It also set up a Charitable Trust to run the mill and this continues to this day.

The Windmill Trust looks after the maintenance and repair of the mill and The Friends of Willesborough Windmill organise the day to day running and fundraising necessary to keep it in full working order. All profits from opening the Mill for guided tours, events, weddings, afternoon teas etc. are passed to the Trust for the continued maintenance and painting of the building.

During this special year the Friends will be organising a varied programme of events and the 'season' starts on Saturday 30 March. Please keep your eye on local press and social media for details.

The Friends work on maintenance projects, both large and small, and enjoy showing people around this iconic building. As with most voluntary organisations new volunteers are always welcome.

Please contact John White on 01233 733416 or visit www.willesboroughwindmill.co.uk



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, please:

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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Email: customer.care@ashford.gov.uk

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

Call: 01233 331111

All our face-to-face enquiries are by appointment only at the Civic Centre, Mon to Fri, from 9am to 3.45pm.

Find your borough councillor:

www.ashford.gov.uk/councillors

County Council services and other useful information

Kent County Council

Website: www.kent.gov.uk 03000 414 141

Ashford Gateway: 03000 416 666

Environment & public rights of way: 03000 417 171

Highways and transport (roadworks, potholes and street lighting): 03000 41 81 81

Kent libraries: 03000 413131

Social care & health: 03000 416161

Other useful phone numbers

Ashford Community Safety Unit: 01233 330891

Leisure & Tourism: Stour Centre: 01233 663503

Julie Rose Stadium: 01233 613131

Kingsnorth Recreation Centre: 01233 879389

Singleton Environment Centre: 01233 666519

Environment Agency floodline: 0345 988 1188

Benefit fraud: 0800 854 440

WIN A FAMILY WEEKEND BREAK WITH TRAVELODGE



The new Ashford Town Centre Travelodge

To celebrate the opening of Ashford Town Centre Travelodge, the company's 574th hotel, the UK's first budget hotel chain has teamed up with *Ashford For You* to offer one lucky reader a free, family weekend break at one of its UK-based hotels.

Ashford Town Centre Travelodge, a 58-room hotel with an on Bar Café is located at Elwick Place close to Ashford International Railway Station. It's the ideal stop over if you are catching an early train or if you have family and friends visiting and room is tight at home.

The hotel offers family, double and accessible rooms with en-suites. All rooms feature the luxurious king-size Travelodge Dreamer bed which sits in a mood lighting surround with

bedside USB charging points. The rooms also offer a Samsung TV with Freeview, and complementary tea & coffee making facilities.

Travelodge has more than 500 hotels across the UK so our winner will be spoilt for choice on where you can stay. Explore historical and cosmopolitan cities such as: Edinburgh, Bath, Newcastle, Liverpool or York. Alternatively take a coastal break in Scarborough, Brighton or Llandudno, or enjoy a rural break to the Lakes District.

For information visit www.travelodge.co.uk

The prize includes a weekend stay in a UK Travelodge hotel with complimentary breakfast* in a family room which caters for two adults and two children.

Only one entry allowed per person. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/ashford-for-you.

Terms & conditions apply: 1. The competition is open to all UK residents aged 18 years or older except employees of the Promoter, their families, agents or any third party directly associated with the competition. 2. The closing date of the competition is 11.59pm on 1 April, 2019. Entries received after this time will not be included. 3. *in those hotels which offer guests a Bar Café 4. No bulk, machine generated, consumer group or third party entries will be accepted. Entries will only be allowed in accordance with these T&Cs. Any attempted interference with the running of this competition will result in a void entry 5. 'Weekend Break' Prize means a complimentary two night stay in a standard double or standard family room with breakfast (*the meal is to be taken in the hotel's Bar Café, winner must check their chosen hotel includes a Bar Café). The prize does not include additional 'Extra items' cost, e.g. Wi-Fi and pets. 6. The prize can be claimed within 12 months of the competition closing date at any UK Travelodge of the winner's choice, subject to availability. This offer is not available on any Travelodge SuperRooms or in Travelodge hotels in Ireland or Spain. 7. Prize is for accommodation only and does not include travel. 8. The prize must be redeemed by 31 December 2020. 9. The prize is non-transferable and non-refundable. There are no cash alternatives.

TO ENTER YOUR NAME IN OUR PRIZE DRAW EITHER:

* Email the editorial team at media@ashford.gov.uk – put Travelodge Competition Entry 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 Travelodge Competition Entry on the card.

We will contact the winner to request consent to provide your contact details to Travelodge to enable you to claim your prize.

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Flip Out Ashford has a soft play area for under-tuos plus equipment that offers a range of high-octane fun for everyone. A slam dunk area, dodgeball arena and Ninja Assault Course add to the attractions and you can record all your flips and tricks with our FlyCam technology.



Cut out the voucher below and bring along to Flip Out Ashford to get two hours bouncing for the price of one. One voucher per person. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers and valid at anytime during opening hours. T&Cs apply. Offer ends Friday 31 May 2019.

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Courtesy of Flip Out and Ashford For You magazine.
Offer ends Friday 31 May 2019.