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Issue 11 | Winter 2020

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Welcome



As we went to press in mid-November, the country was coping with a second national lockdown in a determined bid to get infection rates down, protect the NHS and save lives.

This edition gives us a strong sense of what is being done to support our communities during the pandemic and also clear indications of the hard work which is going into getting our local economy back on track, despite the huge challenges we face. We recognise the importance of listening to our communities so if you have suggestions on how we can better meet your needs then please get in touch.

It's great to read of businesses which are pressing ahead with their plans to open their doors and invest in the future. They clearly have confidence in better times ahead and we share that optimism.

Nowhere is the council's commitment to investing in our futures more apparent than in our Housing department. They are leading the way in Kent when it comes to providing more quality social housing for our residents and our feature details a range of exciting initiatives underway. Elsewhere in this edition you can learn more about how the council is playing its part in combatting crime and anti-social behaviour in our communities.

Finally, hundreds of entries were received for our competitions in the autumn edition as readers again enjoyed engaging with the magazine. We also received positive feedback to the call-out for local photographers to send us their photos of our beautiful borough – these have been featured on our Instagram feed since the last edition was printed. Take a look at [@ashfordbc](https://www.instagram.com/ashfordbc)

Tracey Kerly

Tracey Kerly
Chief executive, Ashford Borough Council

Contents

News 4 & 5

Marking Holocaust Memorial Day, ten top tips for business startups and the discovery of wild polecats in Tenterden!

Supporting communities 6 & 7

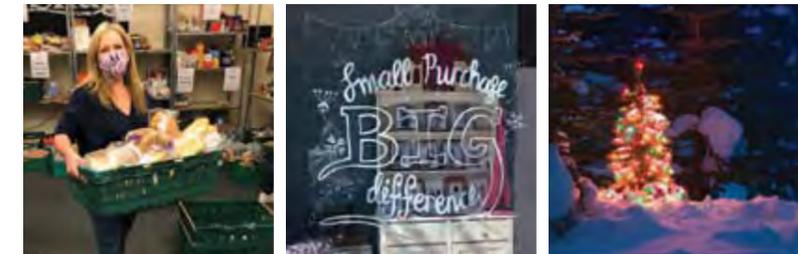
Latest on helping the vulnerable during the pandemic

Our High Streets fight back 8

New investment and confidence in our town centres

New council website 9

Making it easier to access our services



Focus on ABC Housing 10 & 11

Working hard to provide a home for our residents

Environment special 12-15

Christmas & New Year bin collections, festive recycling tips and more

Resolving differences 16 & 17

Spotlight on the work of the Ashford Mediation Service

Keeping our streets safe 18 & 19

Ashford Partnership Against Crime and safeguarding against modern slavery and human trafficking

New year, new you 20

It's never been more important to improve your fitness

Business boost for Tenterden 21

A brighter future for town's tourism

Competitions 22

WIN £250 shopping vouchers and a case of Kentish wine

Editorial

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Write to: Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre,
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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



! Ron's trip down memory lane

For 96-year-old Ron Sutton, a visit to the Coachworks in Ashford's Dover Place was an emotional trip down memory lane. Navigating his mobility scooter around the trendy food and drink venue recently, Ron remembered the 34 years he spent there as a manager for Croford Coaches.

Ron, his wife Carolyn and other family members were invited along by architect Carl Turner, who was commissioned by the council to transform the disused industrial buildings into a smart food and drink destination, events space and business hub for the creative sector.

Ashford born and bred Ron, who lives in Brabourne, said: "It's fantastic, I can't believe how it's changed since I worked here. When I started in 1955 it was a very busy, noisy place. In the early days we mainly built wood

panelled vehicles but by the time I retired in 1989 it was all metal. Exactly where I am now I remember we built a three tiered cattle truck – cows on the bottom level, pigs in the middle and sheep on the top deck.

"It's lovely to see inside the old place again. The buildings haven't changed that much but it's great to see that it's being put to a new use," added Ron, who remains a keen carpenter. His hobby is building large models out of matchsticks which he once exhibited at his local parish church.

Be the Light for Holocaust Memorial Day 2021

Plans are being made for the council's commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2021. This will include a digital exhibition on the council's website at www.ashford.gov.uk/holocaust-memorial-day

Holocaust Memorial Day is the day to remember the millions of people who were murdered in the Holocaust under Nazi persecution and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. It is marked on 27 January as this is the date that Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by the Soviets.

The theme for 2021 is Be the Light in the Darkness and everyone is encouraged to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after a genocide.

More information on Holocaust Memorial Day is available online at www.hmd.org.uk



Wild polecats in Tenterden

Tenterden's Neighbourhood Plan group – working towards formulating a statutory plan to protect green spaces in and around town for future generations – has revealed sightings of more than 2,000 animal and plant species, including the discovery of wild polecats which have been absent from Kent for several hundred years. For details visit www.tenterdenneighbourhoodplan.org



© The Francis Frith Collection



! Can you help with a stag-gering mystery?

It has been believed for years that the cast iron stags which once stood alongside the Hubert Fountain in Victoria Park were melted down during the war effort, but new evidence has come to light that shows this is not the case.

A photo from around the 1950s shows the stags and fountain in the park, albeit missing their antlers. The Victoria Park team uncovered the photo (above) as part of the heritage aspect of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project to revitalise the park, and they are now appealing for anyone who has any information about the whereabouts of the stags to come forwards.

If you have any knowledge that could help find out what happened to the stags, please email victoria.fannon@ashford.gov.uk.

You can find out more about the project at www.ashford.gov.uk/victoria-park, and on social media – search for Victoria Park Ashford.

Coronavirus update



With the on-going restrictions around COVID-19 continuing, some services within the council are still operating differently to the norm. You can find the latest information on our website at www.ashford.gov.uk/coronavirus.

To help reduce the spread, everyone is being encouraged to download the NHS COVID-19 app if you have a compatible smartphone. This means you can check into locations more easily by scanning a businesses' QR code poster for test and trace rather than writing down your details. You will also be automatically notified if you have come into contact with someone who tests positive.

Support is also now available for anyone on a low income who is unable to work from home and who will lose income during their mandatory self-isolation period. To find out if you qualify visit www.ashford.gov.uk/test-and-trace-support-payment.

Businesses and community groups can now download posters and social media graphics to remind customers and visitors to follow the latest guidance. Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/coronavirus-posters

Our Christmas opening hours

If you need to contact Ashford Borough Council during the festive period, our **Christmas and New Year opening hours at the Civic Centre** are as follows: December 21-23 normal hours; December 24-3 January closed; 4 January normal hours. For more details visit www.ashford.gov.uk/christmas-information. **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.



Top tips for business start ups

If the pandemic has given you inspiration to set up your own business, you can find some top tips online to help you. Maybe your idea will be the next Uber, Air B'n'B, Burger King or General Motors which were all started in difficult economic times. Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/business to find the tips and see if you're onto something.

Competition winner



More than 400 readers took part in our autumn edition competition to win a one night stay in a Romney Marsh shepherd's hut for two people. **Congratulations to our lucky winner Angie Longson** and thanks to everyone who took part. See page 22 for our latest fantastic competitions.

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Helping you through the tough times

If money is tight at the moment, whether your circumstances have changed due to COVID-19, or for another reason, the council's Welfare Intervention Officers can help you.

In the last few months, our Welfare Intervention Officers have worked with residents who have struggled for a range of reasons.

A family who moved back into the area who needed urgent support with housing were helped to complete a housing assistance referral. The Welfare Intervention Officer also helped them to apply for universal credit through a requested call back. The family also needed furniture, including basic cutlery, crockery and clothes, so a referral was made to Kent Support and Assistance Service who were able to help them get what they needed.

A limited number of visits have also been completed, complying with social distancing, in gardens to help a couple of Nepalese families who needed help to claim housing benefit and council tax support.

If you struggle with a language barrier or are unable to get out due to disability, face-to-face visits can be arranged, in very limited circumstances. During this current time most of the support is carried out over the phone or via e-mail.

The Welfare Intervention Officers can also make referrals to Citizens Advice Bureau (and other partner agencies). For example, a family who were facing eviction from their private tenancy because they couldn't pay their rent, were referred to CAB so they could get help managing the bailiffs and the extensive repayments they were making each month.

CAB were able to get their monthly payments down to a minimum to enable them to continue paying their rent. A Discretionary Housing Payment helped clear the arrears on their rent and the family were able to apply for an

Exceptional Circumstances Payment for their council tax which cleared the arrears that have accumulated during the pandemic.

If you need help or support, you can contact the team by email at welfareinterventionteam@ashford.gov.uk. All contact will be kept confidential.

Food and wellbeing assistance

There are plenty of businesses throughout the borough who are delivering food and other essential supplies to your front door. Our website has an abundance of information of where to get help accessing the services you need if you need to self-isolate, including an interactive map that highlights what help is available in your area. www.ashford.gov.uk/food-delivery

It can be difficult to keep positive mental health while everything around you is uncertain and different. It is okay to be frustrated or lonely, or to be low, worried, anxious, concerned about your finances, your health and those close to you. Our website www.ashford.gov.uk/wellbeing has lots of information on services that could help.

They can help people apply for:

- > Council Tax Support – help to pay council tax
- > Housing Benefit (for pensioners and certain groups of working age applicants)
- > Exceptional Circumstances Payments – to help with council tax arrears
- > Discretionary Housing Payments – to help with rent arrears
- > Universal Credit – Point in the direction of support to make an application (will help to apply online in exceptional circumstance)
- > Help to apply for Housing Assistance if facing eviction or homeless

Supporting Ashford borough's families with more than food

Low income families who need help and support with food and other household supplies can now join a social supermarket which will offer more than just products.

Renew is a new programme set up by Ashford Vineyard that is intended to help anyone in the Ashford borough who is struggling financially to get to a more stable place and eventually find financial freedom. The social supermarket is an expansion of the foodbank which was set up during lockdown and extends the help and support available to those who need it.

Members pay a small weekly fee (based on family size) to access this six-month programme. The support is two-fold - the weekly food and also the wrap-around care offered to every



member and their family. As part of the membership process, members are offered one-to-one support where they are equipped to reach the goals they have set for themselves and their family. This includes opportunities to strengthen family relationships, become connected with the community and change their circumstances.



Renee Aird, AV Compassion Manager, said: "We are so excited to

come alongside the 15 families that have signed up this month and we look forward to seeing the impact that Renew will have on bringing financial freedom and life to Ashford."

There will also be the chance to use other projects run by Ashford Vineyard, including Storehouse, Dress for Success, and The Beehive, all of which offer clothing, and Mummy's Meals where hot meals are delivered to families needing a little extra love. Through the scheme there will also be opportunities to be connected to Ashford Borough Council, The Beacon Centre, and other organisations as per the needs of individuals and their families.

To find out more visit www.ashfordvineyard.org/compassion.

If you want to register or make a referral you can email compassion@ashfordvineyard.org or call 01233 331919.

Need help? We're here:

Email: help@ashford.gov.uk
Call: 01233 331111 and press 4
(Monday to Friday, 9am-4pm)
or out of office hours call
Kent Together on 03000 419292.

Tenterden volunteers at the ready

As the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved, so has the response of communities to ensure there is always help at hand for those that most need it. For example in Tenterden, a new organisation called Tenterden Volunteer Service (TVS) was set up to match resources to changing demand.

TVS is working alongside the seven-days-a-week Helping in Tenterden (HiT) team which was swiftly mobilised in March to help vulnerable residents with tasks such as co-ordinating food deliveries, collecting and delivering prescriptions and signposting sources of financial help. Within a month, more than 200 volunteers signed up to HiT, and by the end of August they had carried out more than 1,000 'missions'. For details visit www.tenterdenvolunteercentre.org.uk

KEEP ASHFORD TALKING

Are you experiencing problems with your neighbours over anti-social behaviour, noise or boundary issues?
Are you struggling to come to an agreement over child access?
Are there intergenerational issues in your family that are causing endless arguments and stress?



The Ashford Mediation Service (AMS) is a free service available to all residents of Ashford borough experiencing conflict and we're here to help.

AMS doesn't 'take sides'. We work with all parties in dispute to help both 'sides' reach a solution that works for everyone.

We also offer other, very useful services, including our 'Listening Ear' and 'Keep in Touch' services where we are happy to work with individuals if the other party in dispute is not quite ready to get involved in mediation.

Our trained volunteer mediators can work with you and the other party in a way that is convenient to you. That could be over a technology platform such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Skype or face-to-face if you feel comfortable meeting up.

It is with grateful thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund that we are able to expand our services in the Ashford area.

Please get in touch. It's worth a conversation. You can call us at 07845 914838 or drop us an email at info@ashfordmediation.co.uk. QUOTE reference NLF.

Should you require further information, visit our website: www.ashfordmediation.co.uk





Our resilient High Streets

While conditions remain challenging, it's not all doom and gloom in our town centres. Bold entrepreneurs are shrugging off the pandemic blues to invest in new businesses...

Ashford has seen a clutch of new openings in recent months, including the exciting news that Macknade is expanding its popular food hall and restaurant at Elwick Place, while two new restaurants are due to be announced soon.

Macknade is taking the adjoining unit, which Managing Director Stefano Cuomo says will enable him to increase his offering of wine, spirits and non-alcoholic drinks, as well as selling more groceries and an extended delicatessen counter.

Elsewhere in Ashford, German kitchen retailer Kutchenhaus has opened a showroom in Station Road, taking the number of sites across the UK to nearly 40. Cards Direct has chosen to open its first outlet in Ashford in County Square as part of its national expansion plans, while Aspendos, a Turkish restaurant and take-away, has opened in Bank Street joining the new Buenos Aires Nights Steakhouse.

Manager Scott Mount reports that Valerie's Wine Bar in the Lower High Street has enjoyed encouraging trading figures since it opened in July. In New Street, the Rewind retro bar celebrating the 70s, 80s and 90s has also been a big hit.

In Tenterden, the launch of two new restaurants, a linen shop and a bridal store have boosted the town centre. These include Sharen Galvin's The Latte Lounge in Coombe Lane, just off the High Street. Flossy Watts specialises in an eclectic mix of items, stocking Fair Trade, ethical, upcycled and recycled items, and a selection of gifts from more than 20 local artisans.



Window Wanderland

Did you notice an array of beautifully adorned shop windows around the town centre this autumn? Inspired by town centres across the country, Loveashford (in partnership with Made in Ashford) worked on the installation of some carefully crafted messaging to create a Town Centre Walking Trail.

Participants of the trail were encouraged to take a picture of the windows, submitting these to Loveashford via Instagram, to be entered into a competition to win prizes from each business on the trail. Thank you to everyone who entered and supported the high street.

Loveashford latest

Want all the latest information and updates on our town centre? Make sure you're following Loveashford for all the news on our high street (including Park Mall and Elwick Place), from safety messaging and shop opening times, to deals and discounts, you can find them here:

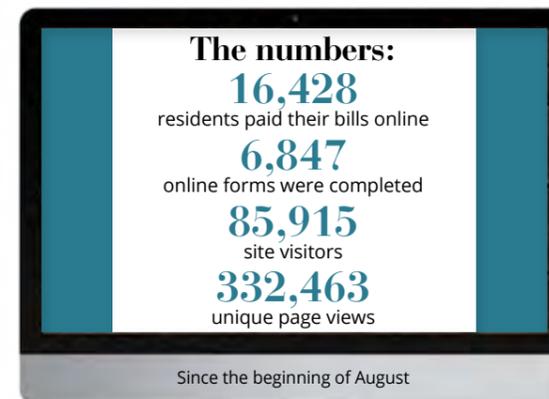
@loveashford



Ashford.gov – your council online

Getting in contact with the council is as easy as ABC...

Following a refresh of our website over the summer users have found our new-look site structure easier to find what they're looking for, with fewer clicks. Our bigger search bar and clear call to action buttons at the top of our content pages have proved popular with more than **332,000** unique page views by almost **86,000** visitors since the start of August.



Cash no longer king

The council is moving towards cashless payments in the Civic Centre and our car parks.

The phased removal of cash payment machines is in response to changes in society, with many people increasingly using digital payment services and contactless payments due to COVID-19.

The council has seen a big increase in contactless payments in its car parks and visitors have also taken advantage of the simple RingGo app which

Top tips:

Why not pay your council tax or rent online? It's quick, easy and saves you waiting in a queue. Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/pay

Got a bulky item you can't take to the tip? Order online: www.ashford.gov.uk/large-item-collection

Did you know?

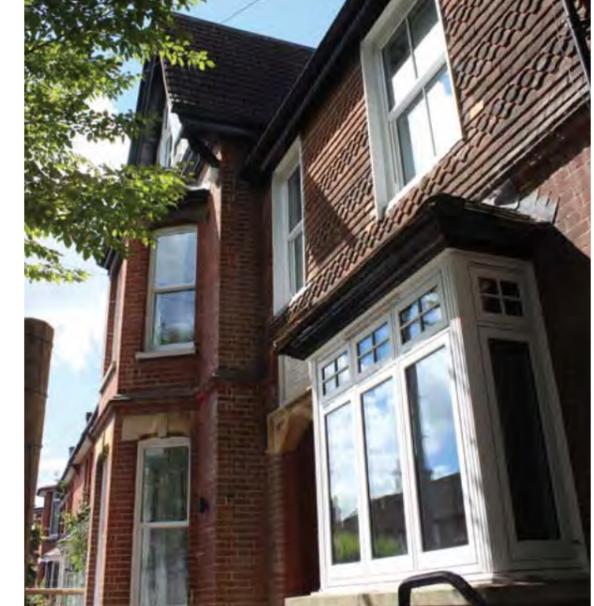
- Our bounce rate (where visitors click straight away from our site) is down from **28%** to **16%**
- Our exit rate has reduced from **32%** to **21%**
- More than **56%** of visits to our website are by mobile phone

If you have any comments about our new website email web.admin@ashford.gov.uk

lets people pay for their parking with a credit or debit card. For more details visit www.ashford.gov.uk/pay

Still want to pay by cash? The option of cash payments for council services is still available at PayPoint outlets throughout the borough. Local PayPoint outlets can be found using a postcode search at www.consumer.paypoint.com





Christchurch Lodge rolls out welcome mat

An innovative project that's set to benefit homeless households and save taxpayers money has been completed in Ashford. The council bought the large disused former vicarage in Beaver Road for £430,000 and has invested around £500,000 to convert it into eight homes, capable of accommodating up to 25 people.

A 12-month refurbishment programme has added facilities like a communal kitchen, dining room and laundry room to the property, which has been renamed Christchurch Lodge.

Christchurch Lodge follows the same blueprint adopted by the council when it created the nearby Christchurch House, a rundown property bought at auction for £278,000 in 2013. It was transformed into good quality short-stay accommodation and was so successful that the money saved on placing homeless people in costly B&Bs meant that Christchurch House paid for itself in four years.

Kent-based Jenner Contractors carried out the Christchurch Lodge conversion and a feature of the project is the use of high-quality products and materials to ensure maximum build quality, environmental sustainability and energy efficiency. Work was halted for a month in early summer due to the pandemic but recommenced after contractors put in place strict social distancing guidelines on site.

Tackling homelessness is a high priority for the authority, which believes that the prevention of homelessness and using the council's own stock to house homeless people, rather than using paid-for nightly accommodation, makes sound financial sense.

Cllr Bill Barrett said: "Following the blueprint of Christchurch House represents a win-win strategy. For five years it has offered households a better solution than the upheaval of living out of a B&B. It is also good news that the council has saved considerable sums of money it would have had to pay in B&B costs."



New beginnings for a New Year

Nowhere is the council's commitment to investing in our futures more apparent than in our Housing department. They are leading the way in Kent when it comes to providing more quality social housing for our residents. Here are some of the exciting initiatives underway...

The first tenants are set to move into the New Quarter following the council's bold deal to buy the 109-home development in the heart of Ashford town centre. The New Quarter is a mix of one and two bedroom open-plan flats spread across an east and west wing adjacent to the landmark Panorama building.

The £18.5m investment represents the largest ever handover of general needs accommodation to be managed on one site by the council. A core aim is to provide affordable rented accommodation to key workers that have an identified housing need, prioritising lettings to men and women who have been on the front line during the pandemic.

It will also free up existing homes through transfers of key workers and, where possible, will provide vacant units in which to house those in temporary accommodation, or from the housing waiting list.

The deal followed an approach to the authority by developers Dukelease. It has seen the council acquire both blocks – 65 quality homes in the east wing and 44 in the west wing.

The acquisition enables the council to deliver on its programme of growing its Housing Revenue Account stock amid high pressure for more affordable housing. It also creates real social benefit and sends out a positive message about cohesive communities in the heart of Ashford town.

Cllr Bill Barrett, the council's portfolio holder for housing, said: "Ashford is committed to delivering quality, affordable homes and in good numbers. This acquisition is a message to those on our waiting list that we're doing everything we can to deliver affordable housing. We have an ambitious pipeline of homes to deliver many projects in the coming years and we will find innovative solutions to grow our stock levels.

"But this project is about far more than that. We are investing in residential accommodation also in our town centre. We have a real stake in our town centre and a vested interest in making it a vibrant place. One in which we create opportunities for those who work here to feel part of something special."

Council Leader Cllr Gerry Clarkson said: "This deal shows that we continue to value delivering affordable housing and that the council thinks holistically about housing need and move-on solutions for those in temporary accommodation. Ashford continues to lead the way in housing development in Kent."

Find out more

If you have a housing need and want more information, visit www.ashford.gov.uk/new-quarter



Government funding secured to build more quality homes

The council has secured £2,528,911 of Homes England funding that will enable it to build another 60 homes at two independent living schemes in the town.

We will receive £1,392,770 to help build 31 replacement homes at The Poplars in South Ashford and another £1,136,142 towards the cost of providing 29 replacement homes at East Stour Court in Willesborough. The latter is due for completion in May 2021 and the former in autumn next year.

23% of Ashford residents expected to be aged 65 or over by 2023.

By 2023 it is expected that 23% of Ashford residents will be aged 65 or over so the council is preparing for the needs of an ageing population by building and remodelling accommodation for older people to live more independently in homes that are the right size for their needs.

To this end, an interactive community consultation has been held over plans to redevelop Oakleigh House, (pictured above) a disused sheltered housing scheme in Watercress Lane, South Ashford, creating 69 high-quality homes for elderly residents. The plan, which has been revised following the consultation, is to demolish the old Oakleigh House and build a new dementia-friendly scheme along the lines of the successful developments at nearby Farrow Court.

Please ensure bins are presented prior to 6am

Christmas Recycling & Refuse collections 20/21

During the festive period your refuse and recycling collection days may be altered. Check out the 2020/2021 calendar below for any changes!

Week	Normal collection day	Revised collection day
Recycling	Mon 21 Dec	No Change
	Tues 22 Dec	No Change
	Wed 23 Dec	No Change
	Thurs 24 Dec	No Change
	Fri 25 Dec	Mon 28 Dec
Refuse	Mon 28 Dec	Tues 29 Dec
	Tue 29 Dec	Wed 30 Dec
	Wed 30 Dec	Thurs 31 Dec
	Thurs 31 Dec	Sat 2 Jan
	Fri 1 Jan	Mon 4 Jan
Recycling	Mon 4 Jan	Tues 5 Jan
	Tue 5 Jan	Wed 6 Jan
	Wed 6 Jan	Thurs 7 Jan
	Thurs 7 Jan	Fri 8 Jan
	Fri 8 Jan	Sat 9 Jan

Normal service will resume Monday 11 January 2021

Bulky Collections & Garden Waste

Bulky waste collection will be suspended from Monday 28 December 2020 to Monday 11 January 2021.

If your garden waste collection falls on Friday 25 December 2020 it will be collected on Monday 28 December 2020. Collections usually due to take place from Monday 28 December 2020 will be suspended until Monday 11 January 2021.

Clinical Collections

Weekly Monday clinical collections will be as normal on Monday 21 December, with collection due on Monday 28 December moved to Tuesday 29 December 2020. Normal clinical collection resumes on Monday 4 January 2021.

To report a missed bin collection visit www.ashford.gov.uk/recycling-waste-and-bins

Green bin

- Christmas cards
- Tin foil & foil serving trays
- Champagne, wine & beer bottles
- Non-foil wrapping paper
- Cardboard boxes
- Sweet/chocolate tins
- Mince pie foil cases



Grey bin

- Tinsel
- Broken decorations
- Bubblewrap & soft plastic packaging like cellophane
- Foil/shiny wrapping paper
- Champagne & wine corks
- Polystyrene



Remember....

Do the scrunch test!

- Only non-foil paper is accepted for recycling.
- To check, scrunch up the paper and if it doesn't spring back then it is non-foil and can be recycled.
- Please remove ribbons and bows from your paper and maybe keep them to reuse next year.
- All extra cardboard boxes can be flattened to save space and placed next to your recycling bin for collection.

Christmas Tree Recycling

This special fundraising campaign, now in its 9th year, offers real Christmas tree collections from homes across the Ashford borough, from Cranbrook, to Chilham and everywhere in between.

Ashford residents can register their real Christmas tree for collection and recycling in return for a donation to Pilgrims Hospices. Last year a record breaking 1,350 real Christmas trees were picked up by Pilgrims Hospices raising more than £21,000 for your local hospice charity.

Ashford Borough Council are proud to support our local hospice and we're hoping even more people will sign up this year. Register your tree for collection by Sunday 10 January 2021 by visiting www.pilgrimshospices.org/treerecycling.

The team of volunteer elves will safely, and in a socially distanced format, collect your tree to be recycled from Saturday 16 – Tuesday 19 January 2021.



Sleigh festive food waste!

Use your food caddy for your leftovers, turkey carcass and all your food waste from sprout tops to carrot and potato peelings!

Visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for handy recipes for those festive leftovers!



Lockdown lessons

COVID-19 has forced us all to make changes, these changes haven't just had an impact on us, they've had a massive impact on the planet too! As we head into 2021 we're thinking about the lessons we've learnt and the changes we want to make permanently to live a little more lightly on the environment.

Save money and the planet

We're all spending more time at home and as we head deeper into winter that means we'll be heating up our homes a lot more often. Did you know homeowners and landlords can now apply for a voucher towards the cost of installing energy efficient and low-carbon heating improvements to homes?

These improvements could help you save up to £600 a year on energy bills! With such major savings to be had we know you want to find out more about this purse and planet friendly scheme.

Visit: www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/pages/green-homes-grant



Keep Crushing It

Did you know during lockdown we've wasted a third less food than we usually would? Saving leftovers, buying only what we need, double checking our cupboards and finding ways to use ingredients that would otherwise have gone to waste (banana bread anyone?) has massively helped the planet and our pockets! Love Food Hate Waste are asking you to Keep Crushing It and reduce food waste for good. Check out some of their handy tips below.

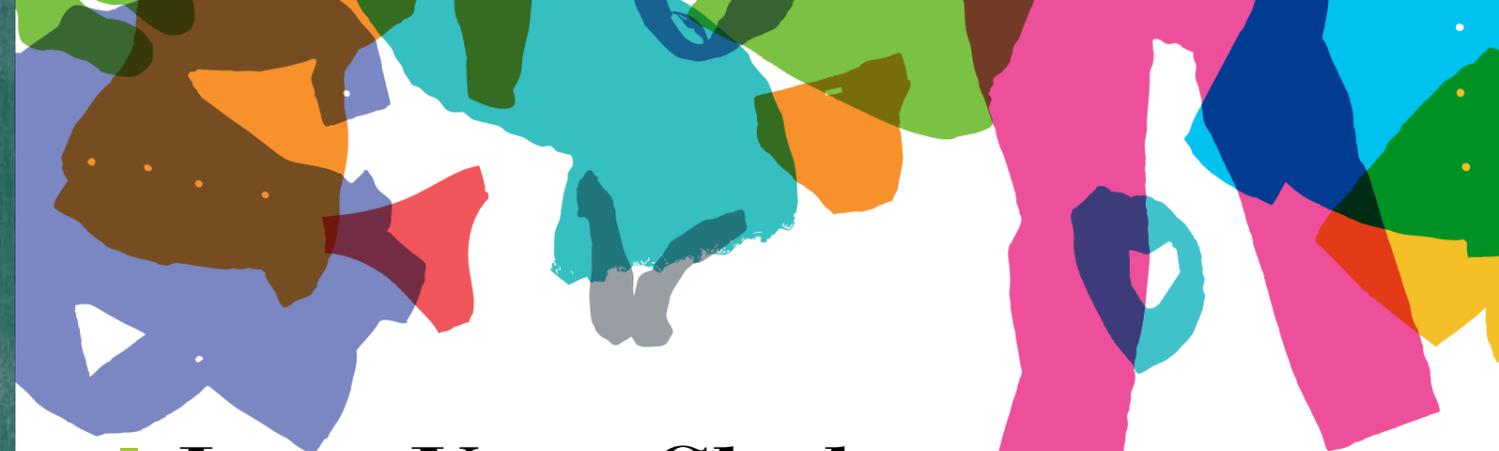
Snap a shelfie – If you're not a list-maker snap photos of your cupboards to refer back to on your phone when you're out shopping.

Chill the fridge out – Did you know the average UK fridge temperature is 2°C too high? Set your fridge to the right temperature so that your food lasts up to three days longer. Use this handy tool to find out what temperature your fridge should be www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/article/chill-fridge-out

Defrost like a boss – Where you store your food makes a big difference to how long it lasts. Check this A-Z guide to find out exactly where you should be storing your items www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/article/food-storage-a-z

Help the hedgehogs

Lockdown saw us all pay more attention to our gardens and our local green spaces. It also brought the news that hedgehogs were officially on the 'vulnerable to extinction list'. This prompted local resident Joanne Atkins to set up a Facebook page for Ashford residents called 'Ashford Hedgehog Observation Group'. The page shares tips and advice on how people can help hedgehogs and followers regularly share pictures and camera footage of hedgehogs in their gardens as well as sharing their handmade hedgehog houses and feeding stations. Why not like the page and help us turn Ashford into a hedgehog haven?



Love Your Clothes

Did you know that in the UK around 336,000 tonnes of our unwanted clothing gets thrown away every year? So many clothes going to waste isn't just bad for your bank balance it's also terrible for the environment! Here are tips some to help your wardrobe work for you and for the planet.

Check if clothing can be repaired, refashioned, or upcycled. The Love Your Clothes website has some great tips and advice for all abilities whether you're new to needlework or a sewing superstar. Check it out here www.loveyourclothes.org.uk/care-repair.

Sell unwanted, good quality, clothing on sites like Ebay, Depop, Vinted and Facebook Marketplace.

Take the #30WearsChallenge. The challenge encourages you to wear what you already have in your wardrobe 30 times and also asks you to think 'Will I wear that 30 times?' before buying anything new.

Use a Guppyfriend Washing Bag when washing your clothes. The bag prevents microfibers from entering into rivers and oceans. The bag means fewer fiber losses which means your clothes look better and last longer.

Do swap and hand down clothes when it's safe to do so.

Don't put your clothes in your green recycling bin, they can contaminate the load. **Don't** donate your clothes to charity shops, textile banks and retail take-back schemes before checking with them what guidance is in place. **Don't** forget to shop second-hand, charity shops can be a treasure trove of undiscovered gems, grab a bargain, help a good cause and save the planet. **Don't** forget to save time and water by waiting for a full load before you switch on the washing machine.



“We don’t take sides”

The pandemic has seen a rise in conflict and tension among families and neighbours, leading to more approaches to the Ashford Mediation Service (AMS). We talk to the charity about its work...

The free service helps to resolve conflict between neighbours over noise, boundary and anti-social behaviour issues, child access disputes, inter-generational conflict, and workplace disputes. The charity helps prevent the escalation of conflict, which reduces intervention by the police and social services. Tackling conflict at an early stage can prevent breakdown in relationships, reduce homelessness and crime.

A National Lottery Community Fund grant is providing IT equipment to conduct mediation services over technology platforms, giving the volunteer mediators the ability to provide remote, rather than face-to-face, mediation during the pandemic. The grant is also funding an awareness campaign.

Chair of Trustees Sue Pitt said: “Our role is to prevent the escalation of conflict so that everyone can live and work in a more harmonious community. We don’t take sides – we are here to help everyone in a dispute to find a solution that works for all.”

Case study – workplace dispute

A small service company which was reliant on cohesive team work to ensure it provided seamless service to clients, started experiencing problems when a new member joined. A problem arose between two staff, quickly progressing to divisiveness among the whole team when people started to ‘take sides’. The atmosphere became unpleasant and work was disrupted.

The team’s manager spoke to both individuals in an effort to resolve the conflict which had arisen due to some unpleasant comments made by one about the other. They were still unable to work well together so the HR Manager contacted AMS and two mediators attended and met with each of the two protagonists separately first, allowing them to explain what the issues were, how they had arisen and what they’d like to happen to resolve the situation.

Case study – community dispute

At a ‘roundtable’ both sides had the chance, uninterrupted, to air their views. They suggested ideas on how to resolve issues and after discussion came up with a solution to previously unshared grievances. Feedback identified that understanding the other person’s perspective had been key to seeing how each had misunderstood the situation. The people involved were now working well together. AMS charges a small fee for workplace disputes.

Two sets of neighbours had moved into the same street at around the same time. They became good friends, however the situation changed for the worse when one of the neighbours began to set bonfires in the garden, creating dense smoke in the neighbouring garden, and arguments ensued.

The situation deteriorated and a physical altercation took place and damage was done to one of the neighbour’s vehicles, resulting in visits to both houses by the police. A referral to AMS was made by the responsible housing officer.

Both parties were visited in their homes by mediators and they agreed to go to a ‘roundtable’ where they discussed events and realised that the problems had started because of one of the partner’s behaviour. It became clear that one neighbour had not been aware of their partner’s behaviour and they then apologised. The other neighbour apologised for aggravating the situation. The mediators helped them to agree a method to deal with any potential future problems. Both neighbours were contacted six weeks later and both agreed they were getting on much better.

Case study – family dispute

We can all fall out with family members, it’s easily done! Take the case of a teenager and his parents and his grandparents. The parents set up ‘house rules’ and disobeying them had consequences, such as the suspension of going out privileges.

One set of grandparents were living in the family home and they viewed the rules as too strict and voiced their opinion regularly as matters got more fraught between the son and his parents. The parents felt undermined by their own parents, the son felt as if his grandparents ‘were on his side’. The parents contacted AMS, and two mediators met with the family.

They listened to each individual separately to allow everyone to speak freely. A ‘roundtable’ was held where everyone talked without interruption. On several occasions, the group had time outs where they could reflect on what had been said. At the end of four sessions, all parties agreed that they could better understand where the others were coming from. The grandparents said that they could see that their interventions had undermined the parent’s role. The parents agreed to work with their son to agree a new set of house rules. The teenager realised that it wasn’t unfair to be asked to consider other members of the home in which he lived.



Visit www.ashfordmediation.co.uk for more information or call 07845 914838.



Making Ashford a safer place...



A significant number of local shops and leisure premises in Ashford town are working together with Kent Police and the council as part of the Ashford Partnership Against Crime, a nationally recognised Business Crime Reduction Partnership.

The Partnership's aim is to reduce crime in our town centre. This is achieved by operating a radio network allowing shops, pubs and clubs to instantly report anti-social behaviour to each other and the council's CCTV control room, and in turn the police.

Often preventing crimes from occurring, it also enables the effective arrest of offenders, for example by ensuring that suspects can be tracked by CCTV and stopped by police. APAC manages a co-ordinated system to exclude troublemakers from members' premises.

A person refused entry at town centre venues can be excluded from all Partnership premises. Other recent work has seen the distribution of knife search wands for door-staff and emergency trauma packs to leisure premises.

Community Safety Inspector Jason Atkinson said: "The work of the Partnership is essential in identifying those who cause most harm and allows officers and members to deal with situations dynamically and effectively.

"The lawful sharing of information helps Kent Police and APAC to update members, which in turn ensures banned individuals do not gain access to premises. This process supports public safety, helps tackle crime and ASB and makes Ashford a safer place for residents, visitors and businesses."

Recognising APAC's input into crime prevention, Ashford Borough Council has provided almost £30,000 of grant funding to the Partnership to replace their outdated radios with a new digital radio network. This has allowed the Partnership to expand, provide greater reliability, and future-proof the Partnership for some time to come.



Cllr Peter Feacey, portfolio holder for community safety and wellbeing, said: "Our grant funding not only demonstrates our appreciation to those town centre businesses who form the backbone of the Partnership, but also provides them with the funding at a time when they have struggled in the wake of Coronavirus. Without this support, they would be unable to commit to these essential improvements for the benefit of the wider community."

There are plans to extend the existing scheme into Tenterden.

Business owners and managers interested in the work of Ashford Partnership Against Crime and joining can find out more at www.ashfordpartnership.org.uk



Fighting modern slavery and human trafficking

Modern slavery and human trafficking should have no place in our community and we believe Ashford Borough Council has a crucial role to play in tackling it, including identifying and supporting victims and working in partnership locally.

As a large-scale local employer and service provider we have a zero tolerance of slavery and trafficking. We aim to be vigilant in identifying cases, swift in reporting such concerns and seek to ensure our supply chain is free of this blight on our society at every level. An annual statement, published on our website, highlights the steps we will take to meet, and indeed exceed, our obligations to this issue. It includes the following standards and we expect those with whom we do business, to meet them:



- To support every individual's human right to live free from abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- To promote ethical business and operational practices in corporate activity and services delivered.
- To take appropriate steps to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not part of its business or supply chains.
- To take reports of witnessed, suspected or disclosed concerns of modern slavery and human trafficking seriously and to ensure that such reports are shared with appropriate law enforcement and other partner agencies, in order that they can be fully investigated.
- To take appropriate action to address actual instances of modern slavery and human trafficking brought to the council's attention and to take all reasonable steps to support and protect its victims.

Our Community Safety Unit works with Kent Police and local agencies to help identify and establish the nature and extent of modern slavery and human trafficking across our borough and tackle it accordingly.

If you would like to know more, or where to report concerns about this topic, further information can be found via:

The Modern Slavery Helpline offers a referral process www.modernslaveryhelpline.org report or by calling 08000 121700 24hrs a day.

Kent Police advice page for spotting the signs, and methods for referral www.kent.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/ms/modern-slavery



Make this the year you improve your health

We may start the new year with the best intentions – to lose weight, exercise more, quit smoking, but after a few weeks of a cold, dark January it's easy to give up. It's hard to make changes and stick to them but, with the threat of COVID-19 still upon us, it's not too late to start.

Why weight matters

Extra weight causes fat to build up around vital organs, making it harder for the body to fight against diseases like cancer and heart disease. By reducing your weight, you can also help cut your risk of having more severe symptoms with COVID-19.

Time to quit

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness (affecting your lungs) so anything that impacts the health of your lungs could impact your ability to fight the

disease. That's why it's important to quit smoking. If you want to quit you can get specialist support in your area call **0300 123 1220**, text 'quit' to **87023** or email **oneyou.kent@nhs.net**. If you're pregnant and smoke speak to your midwife about the support that is available.

Up and at it

We are living an increasingly sedentary lifestyle and we know that sitting is bad for your health. Regular exercise has many health benefits – it can

reduce your risk of major illnesses by up to 50%. As well as helping you lose weight, it can improve your mood, help to lower stress levels, improve your sleep quality and energy levels.

You should try to be active every day and aim to do at least 150 minutes of varied exercise per week. Anything that raises your heart rate, makes you breathe faster and feel warmer is good. A daily walk is a great way to get exercise and top up your vitamin D levels (which boosts your immunity).

Help is at hand

One of the most crucial things that can help you to achieve your goals is support. The support of family and friends is a great start – maybe they have their own health goals too and you can spur each other on. You can find lots of help and support on the NHS website but here's a snapshot:

Weight loss support

- Chat with a **One You** advisor to find out what's available in your area.
- The free NHS weight loss app is a 12 week plan: www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight.

Quit smoking support

- **One You's** 'My Quit Route' app, along with other support, can be found on their website.
- Get your personal quit plan at: www.kent.gov.uk/smokefree.

Lower your alcohol support

- If you'd like support in cutting down on alcohol consumption, **One You** has an app for that! Find the '**Lower My Drinking**' app on their website.

Exercise support

- Chat to a **One You** advisor, get the Active 10 app and more.
- The NHS website has links to a selection of free and paid-for online classes as well as a couch to 5k app – www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise.



ONE YOU here for you

Find us online or via the phone (for the latest update on the **One You** shop – please visit www.oneyoukent.org.uk)
Follow on Facebook: @OneYouKent, or telephone: 0300 123 1220

Business boost for Tenterden

A new Town Centre and Tourism Co-ordinator for Tenterden has been appointed – an unusual step for a town council in Kent – whose responsibilities are to focus on creating and implementing initiatives to help regenerate the High Street, retail and visitor economy.



Group image (top right): Tenterden & District Chamber of Commerce secretary Mike Bartlett; Cllr Sue Ferguson of the MyTenterden website and a member of the High Street Regeneration Committee; Keli Nolan-Lyons, James Fuller, originator of Our Tenterden Business Team; and Tenterden Mayor Cllr Jean Curteis.
Main image: Tenterden High Street

Keli Nolan-Lyons has joined the Town Council team from the Tenterden Leisure Centre, where she has been part of the sales and marketing team and sports bursary administrator for the past eight years. She has also worked as a tour guide for Hush Heath vineyard.

Keli brings to her role a wide range of skills. She initially worked in radio and television, including stints as a presenter for Kiss FM, as a producer on BBC Radio 1, and has been in various roles in theatre and TV with stars including Bonnie Langford, Brian Conley, Noel Edmonds and Wayne Sleep.

She subsequently moved into events and artist management with companies such as the BBC, Nike, ECB and the Arts Council.

Her background in the performance and arts field led to her establishing a business as a personal trainer, working for clients in the City and media, including Channel 4 and Universal Music.

With the birth of her daughter Tileigh in 2012, Keli relocated from London to the Weald, where her husband David was born and raised.

One of her first moves was to bring together key figures in the town's economy to discuss a regeneration strategy, particularly in light of the impact that the Coronavirus has had on the sector. "It is terrifically heartening to hear representatives of both business and the community pledge their commitment to a brighter future," said Keli.

She is already working closely with the tourism team at Ashford Borough Council and colleagues working on the successful Loveashford brand. Tenterden businesses can contact Keli at **01580 762271** or email towncoord@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk.

EXPERIENCE

Ashford & Tenterden

See Find Taste Try

WIN £250 Worth of vouchers
For a shopping spree in store or online at Made in Ashford



Made in Ashford is a collaborative of local designer/makers and crafts people selling and supporting each other in Park Mall shopping centre, Ashford.

Our shop is run by us, Craftship Enterprise CIC, a social enterprise which aims to support and nurture small creative businesses by giving them an affordable platform on the high street to showcase and sell their products. We seek to make creativity accessible to everyone and it is our mission to fulfil this with free online creative workshops and activity packs to give away. We know how good creating is for well being and forging a sense of community and that is why we are so passionate about it! Our social enterprise is an avid collaborator and we try to help as much as possible within our community to make our town an even better place to be.



We are giving away £250 worth of vouchers for a shopping spree in store or online. Not only could you win this incredible prize but those vouchers you spend with us in store or online will help to support small creative businesses! Visit our website to shop online and read more about our work with creative businesses and the community: www.madeinashford.com Follow us @madeinashford on facebook and instagram

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If you live alone or someone you care for does, do you worry what would happen in an emergency?



WIN £120 OF LOCAL WINE FROM **MACKNADE**
FOOD, FAMILY AND FRIENDS SINCE 1847



You can win one of two Kentish Wine Boxes each worth £120 supplied by Macknade, Ashford's favourite new foodie destination in Elwick Place. The Kentish Wine Box features a selection of bottles from local vineyards, including award-winning wines from nearby producers Biddenden Vineyards and Westwell Wine Estate.

If you don't win, the Kentish Wine Box is available to order online at macknade.com. With Christmas approaching, it will be the ideal addition to the festive celebrations.

Or come and choose for yourself at Macknade Elwick Place, where there is an extensive selection of over 90 wines to choose from, plus cheese & charcuterie from the delicatessen to create the perfect platter to pair with your wine. For more information visit macknade.com or @[macknadeelwickplace](https://www.instagram.com/macknadeelwickplace) on Instagram. Open every day with FREE parking after 3pm. Sat nav: TN23 1DY.

Lifeline is a 24 hour personal security system providing an instant response at the touch of a button.

Covering the whole of the South East our service provides the reassurance to enable you to live independently in the knowledge that someone is there should you need them.

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To find out more visit:
www.ashford.gov.uk/lifeline
T 01233 642095 E lifeline@ashford.gov.uk

To enter your name in our prize draws either:

- * Email the editorial team at competition@ashford.gov.uk – put either Made In Ashford or Macknade 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 Made In Ashford or Macknade Competition Entry on the card.
- We will contact each winner to request consent to provide your contact details to Made In Ashford or Macknade 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 competitions is **5pm on Monday 11 January 2021**. 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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FEEL INSPIRED THIS... *Christmas*

Make it easy this Christmas, keep it local at County Square Shopping Centre where it's warm and dry with one-way and social distancing measures to make your visit a safe and pleasant one.

With a great choice of Christmas gifts, High Street fashion and seasonal essentials plus a choice of cafes to take a break, we'll make Christmas shopping as easy as possible.

Check out our website for Christmas opening times



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