

ASHFORD FOR YOU

Issue 10 | Autumn 2020

YOU

YOUR BOROUGH, YOUR MAGAZINE

FOCUS ON THE

GREAT OUTDOORS

Reader photos of our beautiful borough

ASHFORD INTERNATIONAL STUDIOS

NEW ERA FOR VICTORIA PARK

WIN

- Designer Outlet shopping vouchers
- An overnight stay in a shepherd's hut on Romney Marsh



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL





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. AMS facilitates and manages the conversations to help you reach a mutually beneficial conclusion.

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.

Whatever your issues, we can either help you with our mediation service or signpost you to another community service who can help you.

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



A new operator for the town's leisure facilities



Freedom Leisure have commenced their partnership with Ashford Borough Council to manage the Julie Rose Stadium, The Spearpoint Pavilion, Conningbrook Park and The Stour Centre.

We are a not-for-profit leisure trust which manages leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of partners across the UK, and together with Ashford Borough Council we aim to continue to encourage a happy, healthy community in Ashford – enabling more people to be more active more often.

Julie Rose Stadium

While the Stour Centre is closed for refurbishment you can still work out with Freedom Leisure from September 1st at the Julie Rose Stadium. Changes have been made at the centre to provide the opportunity for people to still access the exercise facilities they enjoy.

- Larger gym space
- Group Exercise programme
- Athletics track

Membership from £20 a month available now

The Stour Centre is currently closed for a major investment project which will transform the centre. The finished project will include:

- A brand new reception area with a café serving Costa coffee.
- A climbing feature and an adventure play area, as well as
- An extension to the gym
- Refurbishment of the fitness changing rooms
- A new studio
- The addition of new water features in the pool.

Stay up to date with the developments on the website and on social media

Membership from £20 a month available now. For information go to www.freedom-leisure.co.uk/centres/julie-rose-stadium



Welcome



Following the publication of our COVID-19 Special Edition in the summer, it is a welcome return to our planned 24-page autumn edition of the magazine. On behalf of the council I offer my

condolences to all those who have lost loved ones to the Coronavirus since we published our special edition in early June.

This edition gives us the opportunity to reflect on what has been done – by the council and others – to help our communities and businesses over the summer. It is also time to look ahead with renewed confidence and enthusiasm to plot our path to recovery, to report on positive developments which offer us new hope for a return to better and happier times.

There may still be bumps in the road ahead as we navigate our way back towards 'normality' but if the past six months have taught us anything, it is that the determination, resilience, pride and community spirit shown by our residents, businesses, charities, voluntary organisations and of course our council's members and staff, makes us all stronger together.

Finally, we were delighted to receive nearly 900 entries for our two competitions in the spring edition – smashing all previous records. There has been an understandable delay in our lucky winners being able to redeem their fabulous prizes but I'm sure they will thoroughly enjoy their Eurostar trips and spa break at the London Beach Hotel. And good luck to everyone who enters our competitions to win Designer Outlet shopping vouchers and an overnight stay in a shepherd's hut on Romney Marsh.

Tracey Kerly

Tracey Kerly

Chief executive, Ashford Borough Council

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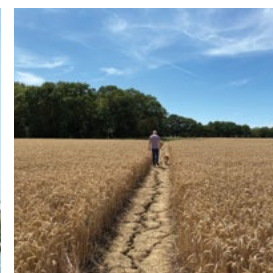
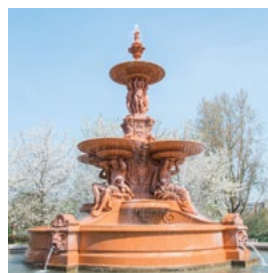
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Editorial

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Printed by

William Gibbons & Sons Ltd.

Front cover image courtesy of our photographic competition entrant Big Welsh Paul. A special thank you to him for a fantastic front cover image featuring the River Stour in Wye.

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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:

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Write to us at the above address.

Please note: The Civic Centre is only open for pre-booked appointments. All visitors will need to wear face coverings as per government guidance (information correct at end of July, please check website for most updated guidance).

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



Flanders roundabout marks links with WW1

Poignant reminders of Ashford's strong links with World War One now greet motorists using one of the busiest access roads to the town.

The roundabout where Malcolm Sargent Road meets the A2042/Bad Munstereifel Road and Avenue Jacques Faucheux, close to the Designer Outlet has been renamed Flanders roundabout.

It is part of a wider scheme to improve the safety, appearance and maintenance of the town's 'gateway' roundabouts undertaken by Ashford Borough Council's Aspire Landscape Management team and Kent County Council Highways.

Nine European Quercus trees have been planted and eight 'British Tommy' soldier silhouettes and the town's much-loved floral tank installed.

A wildflower meadow containing poppies has also been sown. So not only does this scheme help to make one of Ashford's key gateway roundabouts safer but it is also enabling us to celebrate our heritage and close links with the Armed Forces.



Battle of Britain anniversary

September 2020 marks the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. 15 September 1940 was declared Battle of Britain Day, when RAF Fighter Command secured a decisive victory over the German Luftwaffe and prevented the invasion of Britain.

As we did with the 75th anniversary of VE Day, we will be commemorating this digitally through the heritage section of the council website. There will be information and photos of how the borough played its part in the successes of 1940, and the national picture, and a video message from the new Mayor of Ashford, Cllr John Link.

Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/battle-of-britain to find out more.

Health bosses urge residents to get tested

The Government has urged communities to get tested if they suspect they might have COVID-19. They are also looking for volunteers to sign up to vaccination trials

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/research/coronavirus-vaccine-research



Link up with new Mayor

The borough's new Mayor, Cllr John Link, has chosen to support three charities during his time in office – Ashford Street Pastors, Tenterden Memory Dementia Café and Parkinson's Ashford.

“The Pastors patrol the streets throughout the nights on Fridays and Saturdays. Their team of caring volunteers provide a reassuring presence by listening to and helping vulnerable people. The Café provides essential support in a relaxed setting for those living with dementia, their family and carers. Parkinson's Ashford provide an excellent programme of help for those with this dreadful disease.”

Cllr Link, who is serving his third time as Mayor, was born and raised in St Michaels Tenterden.

After completing two years of National Service he continued his trade as a mechanic in Tenterden, eventually buying the Mercers Garage in Station Road until his retirement 15 years ago. He is an active sportsman at the Tenterden Bowls Club, is Chairman of the Cinque Ports Mayors Association and still finds time to enjoy his beautiful garden.

Read our interview with the new Mayor here:
www.ashford.gov.uk/news/blog/meet-the-mayor

Welcome to our new website

Some readers may have noticed that our website looks a little different – well we're pleased to be able to share our new-look site with you. After months of hard work and consulting with the community, we hope that you'll now find it easier to complete transactions with the council.

Working with a local digital company we have restructured the website to make it easier to find what you're looking for, in fewer clicks.

Other new features include a more prominent search bar and clear call to action buttons at the top of our content pages.



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

e-newsletter sign up

Want the latest council news delivered straight to your inbox? Based on your suggestions for how we communicate with you in our 2018 Resident's Survey, we have launched an e-newsletter.

Sign up to receive regular notifications on all the latest news, information and updates from us here:

www.ashford.gov.uk/contact-us/get-updates-from-the-council



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Green Tenterden goes even greener

For years, the attractive grass verges which fringe the High Street have been known as 'Tenterden Greens'. Now, the town is going even greener, with initiatives to make the town more environmentally-friendly and lovelier than ever.

They include:

- A council committee set up to establish targets to help the town meet its commitment to carbon-neutrality by 2030. An air pollution reduction scheme is a priority, focused on schools, while monitoring vehicle emissions, tree planting and the availability of car-charging points are on the agenda.
- Establishing the town's first wildlife habitat at Kiln Field. Areas of grass are being left uncut to see what plants grow through the seasons, the pond has been cleared and restocked with flora and fauna, and wood from storm-damaged trees and donated logs has been used to create bat boxes and 'bug hotels'. The town council has spent £22,000 on Kiln Field – with much of the expenditure likely to be covered by contributions from housing developers – and a further £1,000 has been secured from Kent County Council for a pond-dipping platform for children.
- Increasing the displays of flowers and shrubs in the town centre, and encouraging the natural growth of wildflowers and grasses along verges.
- Extra measures to recycle green waste – non-green waste is disposed of without going to landfill – and a new water-harvesting system.

Reducing our carbon footprint

We will be reviewing our draft Carbon Neutral Strategy over the coming months to reset our long-term ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. In the meantime as we work to recover from the Coronavirus pandemic, achieving carbon neutrality is a key component in our Recovery Plan. Visit our website where you'll find more information about steps we're taking to reduce our carbon footprint. Want to reduce your own carbon footprint? We've got plenty of tips and resources to help you: www.ashford.gov.uk/your-council/carbon-neutral-agenda

Vicarage Lane scheme moves forward

Consultants have been appointed to help deliver the ambitious Vicarage Lane town centre redevelopment project in Ashford. The scheme, which includes the former Mecca bingo hall in the Lower High Street, is a proposed mixed use development, aiming to deliver quality homes, cultural and performance space, food and drink outlets and workspace to complement the town's heritage.

Our proposals include the part demolition of the rear of the former bingo hall to reveal an uninterrupted view to the iconic Grade I listed St Mary's Church, while retaining the high street frontage of the building to create a multi-use indoor event space.

We believe the scheme will help rejuvenate Ashford, enhance our cultural offer, create significant employment opportunities and help attract inward investment. As we emerge from the pandemic, there is a compelling need for our High Streets to reinvent themselves and what they offer, and our expert team of consultants will help us achieve this.

Have your say on planning

During the social distancing required due to Coronavirus, councils have been given extra powers to carry out planning consultations in different ways where statutory consultation methods may not be possible. This includes using social media to notify residents of applications near them. We will be using our social media channels to publicise applications and encourage people to have their say in addition to the statutory consultation methods that are possible.

It is important to note that while we can use social media to promote consultations, all responses must be made through the official channels using our portal. You can also sign up to receive notifications of any applications near your home. You can do this online at <https://planning.ashford.gov.uk>, select Applications near me.

Competition winners

A record-breaking 900 readers took part in our spring edition competitions to win two pairs of return Eurostar tickets to Paris, Lille or Brussels from Ashford International, and also an overnight spa break for two people at the fabulous London Beach Country Hotel & Spa in Tenterden. The winners of the Eurostar prizes are Elizabeth Duffy and Toby Hinton and Caroline Ross is the lucky winner of the spa break. Congratulations to our winners and thanks to everyone who took part. See page 22 for our latest fantastic competitions.





The Road to Recovery

Council sets out priorities to help the community get through recent times.....

A roadmap for how the council will prioritise services and projects that will build a stronger community and help our local economy recover has been agreed.



The council recognises that many people have suffered considerable hardship during the pandemic including illness, loss of loved ones, loneliness and isolation as well as financial hardship. The Recovery Plan therefore sets out how we will help residents to get through these tough times, either directly, or by signposting to where support is available via other organisations.

“ A caring and supporting place; where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector come together to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing. ”

The priorities for the council continue to include providing affordable homes to meet local housing need and more temporary accommodation for those at risk of homelessness, and will also focus on increasing participation in cycling and walking, improving broadband coverage and reliability and refurbishment of Victoria Park.

Recovery Plan

Covers the next 18 months. Includes four key themes:



supporting economic recovery



supporting community recovery



place making, regeneration & infrastructure



organisational change & workforce development



The Recovery Plan was adopted by the council's Cabinet in July, and will be kept under constant review. For more information visit our website: www.ashford.gov.uk/recovery-plan



Lights go up on global film and TV studios hub

When the pandemic was at its height, Ashford received a massive boost when ambitious plans for a £250m TV and film studio-led regeneration of the derelict Newtown Works were approved. And with ground works already underway here's what the project means for the borough...

Large-scale developments are often described as 'game changing' by over-enthusiastic architects and investors but for the Newtown Works project in Ashford the size and scale of the transformation of this large disused railways site which has stood empty for nearly 40 years truly deserves that label.

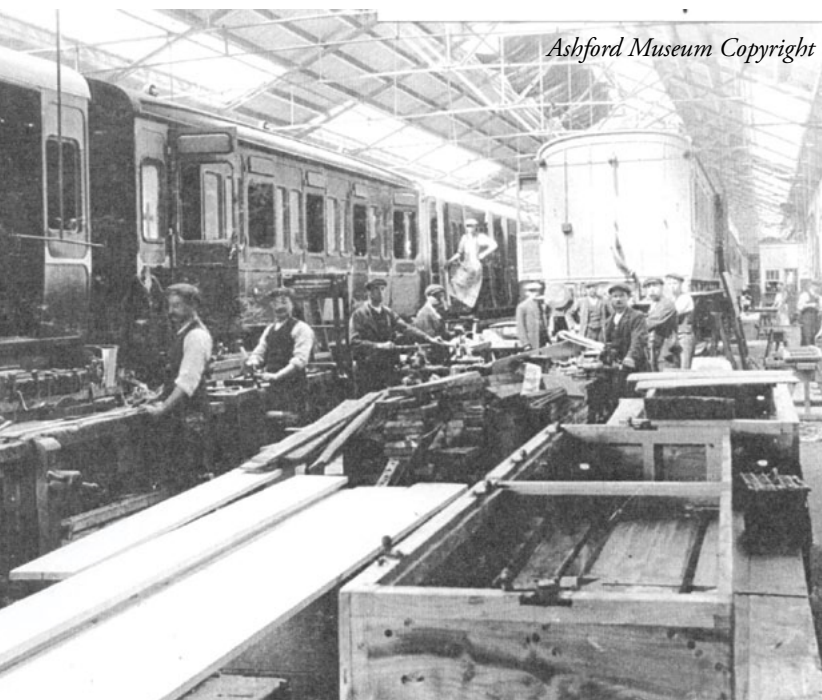
The scheme is destined to put Ashford on the map as a key UK hub for the creative industries, boosted further by our fast connections to London and Europe from the adjacent international station.

Work to deliver 240,000 sq. ft of dedicated production space has already started, with a target date of early 2023 set for the launch of Ashford International Studios, supporting the creation of 2,000 jobs and a major new creative hub for the UK. Four new build film studios will be equipped with the highest acoustic and lighting specifications.

The project's master developer Quinn Estates, working with its funding partner U+I, and operator The Creative District Improvement Company, alongside award-winning architects Hollaway, have spent more than three years developing the project.

They will also deliver a 120-bed hotel and repurpose Grade II listed locomotive sheds for mixed commercial and residential use, including workshops and 300 apartments with space for a new Kent Film School, in partnership with local universities and colleges. A roof-top restaurant and a 383-space multi-storey car park are other key features.

Mark Quinn, CEO, Quinn Estates, said: "This investment will deliver an exciting new era for Ashford. The demand for studio space has never been higher, and the pandemic has not changed that."





Richard Upton, Chief Development Officer at regeneration specialist U+I, said: “Newtown Works will be a jewel in the crown of the UK’s entertainment industry, rejuvenating this previously underused part of Ashford with a creative new community. The scheme demonstrates how, through collaboration and creativity, the property industry can work together to deliver homes, generate jobs and create meaningful places even during challenging times.”

Guy Holloway, from Folkestone-based Holloway, added: “We are incredibly proud to be the architects of Newtown Works, this is a significant opportunity for Ashford to embrace a new creative industry and resurrect these disused listed buildings, and we look forward to helping to realise this ambition.”

Piers Read and Jeremy Rainbird, founders of The Creative District Improvement Co. said: “Global streaming giants have already expressed interest in the scheme as demand for their services booms and before there is a huge backlog in production, as people stay at home and burn through original content at record levels.

“We have the ability to create thousands of jobs for people which is crucial at this time and we will also be able to ensure creative talent and skills are harnessed and nurtured through our planned education centre. We are thrilled that the council recognise the importance of Ashford International Studios and have given consent to this development which will deliver huge opportunities through its massive expansion of the industry in the UK.”

For more information on Newtown Works visit

www.quinn-estates.com/property/newtown-works

What happens next?

Since the project got planning approval in April, the developer has been busy carrying out considerable due diligence to ensure the site is ready to start the main construction programme in 2021. This is the first of many steps that will guarantee swift delivery of Newtown Works.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, preparatory works are currently being completed to give the team a head start next year. This includes geotechnical work in which engineers will investigate what’s beneath the ground’s surface.

According to the current project phasing, the scheme will be complete by the first quarter of 2023. The developer says that given the size and scale of the Newtown Works project, this is an ambitious timeline, but one that will bring significant job opportunities to Ashford both during and post-construction at a time when people will most need them.





Coping with COVID-19

How the council supported residents in their time of need.....

CCOVID-19 has had an enormous impact on every aspect of our lives, from the perspective of our nation, local community and immediate friends and families.

Throughout the pandemic the council has sought to protect lives and minimise disruption upon our essential

services and the local economy. This has been achieved by reducing direct risks to the public and supporting voluntary and community groups who have also been focused on supporting those affected by the virus.

Ashford For You magazine looks back at how the council reacted to COVID-19....

“ Throughout this pandemic the council has adapted to the ever-changing landscape and the challenges that the virus has raised. We have changed the way we normally operate to ensure we are looking after the most vulnerable in our society. ”

ALMOST £60,000

PAID TO AROUND 45 COMMUNITY GROUPS

The residents of the borough have also stepped up to help in a variety of ways which has been truly phenomenal and has helped show a different side to our communities. You can find out more over the following pages.

20,000 reasons to thank the Scrubbers

The volunteers who joined Ashford, Dover, Folkestone Scrubbers, which formed on 31 March, have done a remarkable job producing 20,000 items of PPE for use by local organisations.

It raised £15,000 to buy 10km of fabric, which was cut, packaged and distributed by volunteer drivers who racked up 1,554 deliveries and

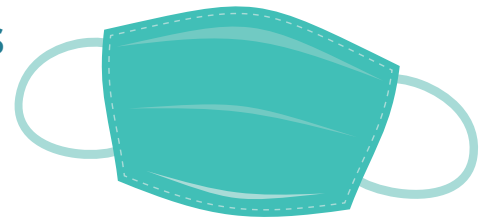
collections. Volunteers used the fabric to sew 4,089 sets of scrubs, 6,499 scrub hats, 3,708 fabric masks, 4,691 fabric wash bags and 450 surgical gowns.

The Scrubbers supplied William Harvey Hospital, Ashford Ambulance Station, Wye Surgery, Brabourne care centre, Pilgrims Hospice Ashford, Willesborough Health Centre, Safe

Hands Ashford and many more. This hard work equates to 42,735 volunteer hours and the group says that its efforts to provide PPE have saved the NHS nearly £250,000. A truly extraordinary effort and congratulations to all involved.

See pages 12/13 for news of a Scrubber who has won a prestigious Ashford Applause.

Roundups of key community supporters



Still work to do...

In the special COVID-19 edition published in June, we showcased the remarkable and humbling work of groups in the frontline of caring for their communities. Many of them have now stepped back but for others, there is still work to do...

For the Ashford Volunteer Centre, the new 'normal' after the easing of lockdown restrictions is reshaping the way the group works with partners, inspires and supports volunteers and charity groups and helps deliver services to those most in need of help.

The organisation has had to take a different approach to delivering services, requiring it to be more flexible and constantly evolving and innovating its working practices.

Volunteer Centre Ashford

The befriending service is being extended, including the letter writing service. AVC is looking for more volunteers to get involved, writing to vulnerable people for whom receiving a letter and enjoying new contact with a penfriend is hugely important and can make such a difference to their wellbeing and happiness.

Getting used to a new 'normal' means that social distancing and personal safety measures are now embedded in AVC's working practices, said chief executive Beth Peal.

"We are very lucky to have strong partnerships, with Ashford Borough Council, parish councils, food banks, mental health and wellbeing groups etc. We are convinced that our new approach is working and we are facing the future with renewed confidence."
www.ashfordvc.org.uk

Ashford Mediation Service 'keeps us talking'

Ashford Mediation Service provides free services for residents experiencing conflict with their neighbours over boundary issues, noise or anti-social behaviour or disputes over child access and inter-generational conflicts. During the pandemic, AMS continued to offer mediation services to the community via technology platforms such as Skype and Zoom, but with lockdown restrictions now eased, it is able to once again offer face-to-face mediation.

AMS, which receives significant financial support from Ashford Borough Council, offers both a 'Listening Ear' and a 'Keep in Touch' service where it can work with residents to refer them to either a trained conflict coach or failing that, it can refer the individual to one of its many volunteer, charitable or council-managed partners who work together collaboratively in a 'Keep Ashford Talking' initiative. Mediation is a way to help both parties to find ways to communicate and compromise in order to reach a solution that works for everyone.

Try it, it's free!

Contact info@ashfordmediation.co.uk or call on 07845 914838.

Visit www.ashfordmediation.co.uk/ and www.facebook.com/ashfordmediation service and Twitter at www.twitter.com/AshfordMediator/



Welfare Intervention Officers

If you are struggling to understand any of the following issues, the Welfare Intervention Officers are here to help you with:

- Council Tax advice, including Council Tax debt advice
- Help to claim Council Tax Reduction or Housing Benefit
- Help to claim Discretionary Housing Payments or Council Tax Exceptional Circumstances Payments
- General housing advice, including advice regarding rent arrears
- Referrals for homelessness advice
- General advice around all welfare reform such as the benefit cap, Universal Credit and other benefit changes

If you have been financially affected by Coronavirus, and need help with your finances or claiming benefits please contact us today: welfareinterventionteam@ashford.gov.uk

VERA comes up trumps

Shortly after the lockdown we launched our Voluntary Emergency Response Appeal (VERA), setting ourselves the ambitious target of raising £10,000 to help with the borough's response to and recovery from the pandemic. The great news is we not only reached this but surpassed it by raising more than £10,200!

Seventy donations were made to the fund, with contributions from residents and local companies such as Givaudan and Countryside Properties. The money raised will be used to help our most vulnerable residents as we look to the future of a post-pandemic borough.

ASHFORD APPLAUSE WINNERS

Round of applause for our champions!

All our thoughts are with those who have suffered loss due to COVID-19. If anything positive has come out of the last few months, it's surely that Ashford's community has never been stronger. As the pandemic took hold, our community came together like we've never seen before. The selfless acts of kindness and the compassion shown to those needing to shield during lockdown will forever be cemented in our local history.

To recognise these incredible people and their contributions to the community, we launched the Ashford Applause; an award scheme that put these people on the map and celebrated their selfless acts of kindness across the borough.

Launching in June and finishing last month, Ashford Applause has showcased the best of our borough during a difficult time. We were delighted to receive so many

nominations which have brought to light the amazing contribution people have been making to the community.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the campaign, made a nomination or graciously accepted the title of community champion. A big thank you also to resident artist Bethany Illustrations, who provided each of our champions with these fantastic personalised portraits. Here are all of our community champions...

WINNER 1

VIOLET



Violet Fuller, who gave up hours of her time to sew over 300 items for the Ashford, Dover and Folkestone Scrubbers group.

WINNER 2



#ashfordapplause

HOLLY

Holly Cripps, who delivered food parcels and shopping to the residents of Stanhope.

WINNER 3



SHANE

Shane Deacon, who went out of his way to care for his neighbours and do their shopping, all whilst working fulltime at Canterbury Hospital.

WINNER 4



CHRISTINE

Christine Winch, who has been dedicating her time outside of working as a full-time Pharmacist to creating up to 70 food packages a week for the residents of Bethersden.

WINNER 5



STUART

Stuart Weller, a local magician and entertainer who has been creating his own weekly YouTube videos to keep families entertained during lockdown, as well as raising money for charity.

WINNER 6



CHLOE

Chloe Falder, who founded and coordinated PPE Team Tenterden; a group of volunteers who have made more than 12,000 items of PPE since the start of lockdown.

WINNER 7



TOM

Tom Claykens, who set up Biddenden Beats Corona; an initiative to help people in the area if they needed help with shopping, prescriptions or even if they just wanted to receive a friendly phone call.

WINNER 8



ASH

M.A. Miah - known to most as Ash - who has provided over 1,400 free meals from his Cinnamon Spice Restaurant to local key workers, as well as delivering shopping to many local elders who are isolating.

WINNER 9



EMILY

Emily Brooks, a nurse who set up Crisis Kitchen at the start of the pandemic, and has since cooked and delivered thousands of meals every week (either free or at cost) to support families, the elderly and the homeless in the community.

WINNER 10



JOHN

John Howell, who formed a volunteer group called Community Care Ashford at the beginning of lockdown. The group supported vulnerable and elderly residents by helping them get access to medicine and food, as well as encouraging neighbours to look out for each other.

High streets open for business

As lockdown was eased and non-essential shops, hospitality and leisure businesses reopened during June and July, the council worked with them to ensure this was done safely. The Licensing and Environmental Health teams were out on the streets to check on how businesses were operating, and to offer advice and support.

Through the EU's Reopening High Streets Safely fund, new signage and hand sanitiser points were installed across Ashford and Tenterden. These will remain in place while social distancing and other hygiene measures are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The reopening of the town centres was also advertised through radio and newspapers across the county. Shoppers in Tenterden were able to take advantage of free parking at Tenterden Leisure Centre and Station Road through July and August.

During lockdown there were many businesses who refocused their efforts and transformed into takeaways, started selling essential groceries and set up distributing to those in the community who were shielding. If you can support your local high street while you're doing your shopping, please do, the borough's businesses need our backing.

Case study – Valerie's Wine Bar

Valerie's Wine Bar, in the Lower High Street, Ashford, was due to open in mid-March, but due to the lockdown, only managed to hold a small opening event before they were forced to close. The delay gave them time to finalise their vintage interior, and they finally opened the doors to the public in early July.

Scott Mount, the new manager, said: "We've been really lucky, we've been really well looked after by LoveAshford with lots of social media posts and support. The first week has been so much better than we expected. We're fully booked with reservations and we have had to hold a reserve list as well.

"People have been saying 'this is just what Ashford needs', it's such a



relief to know that we're doing what people want. The local businesses around us have been really supportive too."

He concluded: "It was a brilliant week to start off with."

Supporting our local businesses

The council worked hard to pay out more than £27m in grants to 2,300 Ashford businesses who qualified for government support while they were unable to trade (figures correct as at mid-July). This support was vital to enabling them to stay open and reopen for business as lockdown eased.



Groups turn to council for help



We are very appreciative of the projects and services that community and voluntary groups deliver to local communities and residents, and we were keen to support those who were struggling with the financial impacts of COVID-19.

As a result, we provided financial help through the Coronavirus Emergency Community Fund. The council has funded nearly 50 organisations across the borough with grants totalling more than £60,000. Grants have gone to various groups including those who provide youth, sports and arts activities, health and wellbeing and advice services, community support, and foodbanks.

Among the more unique services we have supported with a Coronavirus Support Grant is Wye Community Farm who provide volunteering

and training opportunities in farming and rural crafts for a range of disadvantaged groups with the aim of improving their confidence, wellbeing and employable skills to get them back to work.

The farm, which was set up in 2007 and is entirely run by volunteers, told us the grant was "incredibly welcome" and said it would be a lifeline to ensure it could continue to feed the animals during lockdown and deliver services once it has fully reopened again.

To find more visit:
www.wyecomunityfarm.co.uk

What's happening in Victoria Park?

It's now a year since we found out that we'd been granted National Lottery Heritage Funding for our revitalisation of Victoria Park and Watercress Fields. This funding will pay for two thirds of the cost of the project.

As part of the funding, we now have three new members of staff working on the project - Roger Batho, Nicola Priest and Victoria Fannon. The Victoria Park Team said: "We're all really lucky to be a part of a project contributing to the stewardship of one of Ashford's oldest and most important public spaces. The Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Project is almost unique in its scope of ambitions, taking in community space, orchards, local history, sport, and even an otter holt along the River Stour!"

"Each of us is so happy to be part of something like this which has so many real ways it can make what is already a great park even better."

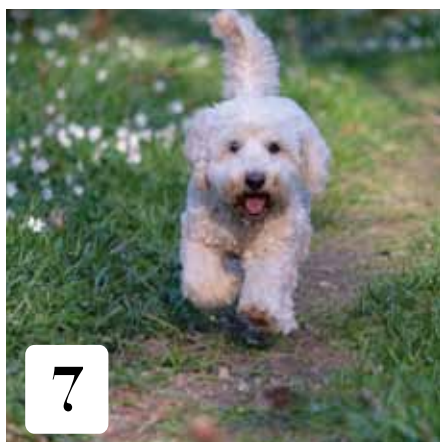
Roger is our new Project Manager. He will be overseeing all the work on the project - managing the budget and the team, working closely with NLHF and generally keeping the project on track.

Vicky is the Volunteering and Community Engagement Officer and will be working closely with local people to grow opportunities for involvement at Victoria Park.

Nicola is the Youth Involvement Co-ordinator and will be setting up and overseeing children's and youth activities opportunities for young people to get involved in music, street art, nature, heritage and other creative activities. She will also be facilitating opportunities for young people to shape the development of the park and impact how it could be used by young people in the future.



For more information on the project and upcoming events visit www.ashford.gov.uk/victoria-park or Follow on  Twitter @VictoriaParkABC,  Facebook @VictoriaParkABC and  Instagram @VictoriaParkAshford.



Ashford in the frame...



During July we called out to local amateur photographers to send us their images of hidden countryside gems discovered during lockdown walks across the borough. Instead of the usual event listings, for this edition we want to encourage Ashford residents to get out and enjoy the stunning changes in scenery as autumn colours begin to paint our landscape. We had an overwhelming number of responses and sadly we couldn't fit them all in here so we'll be sharing even more of your fantastic pictures on our Instagram feed over the coming weeks. Find us [@ashfordbc](#)

1. Penny Mills - Singleton Lakes; **2.** Annie B (@annievisuals_) - Hothfield Heathlands; **3.** Kevin Miles - Great Stour near Conningbrook Lakes; **4.** Melissa Dawkins - Near Smarden; **5.** Konstantine Charis (@kc_mod) - Jay in the Warren; **6.** Michael Watts - Hothfield Common; **7.** Roger Lightfoot - Woodchurch; **8.** Robert Anderson - Hothfield Common; **9.** Lottie Ashlee - Bethersden; **10.** Mark Gostling - Brook Horse; **11.** David Holland (@davidch36) - Bilsington **12.** Paul Webb (@paulwebb5292) - Singleton Lake;



13. Sophie Law – Kennington Quarry; 14. Mariusz Neuman – Conningbrook Lakes; 15. Mick Judd – Great Chart Wood; 16. Steve Jackson – ISS, Orion, M45 and Venus; 17. Susan Scullard - River Stour, Buxford Meadow, Singleton; 18. Bethany Loades (@bethanytaylorphotography) – St Michael's, Tenterden; 19. Andy Crust – Singleton Lake; 20. Matt Harris (@matt_harris_) – Finberry Village; 21. Alison Jane Miles (@AJMSnaps) – Bethersden; To see more photos head to www.experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk



Use RingGo for touch free parking!



Motorists using car parks operated by Ashford Borough Council can now park completely touch free by using the UK's no.1 parking app, RingGo. By paying for parking quickly and easily on your phone, there is no longer any need to handle coins or queue up to use the parking machine.

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, motorists are understandably wary about having to touch coins or parking machines. So, to keep everyone as safe as possible, the council is recommending the use of RingGo to pay for parking instead.

The fastest and simplest way of using RingGo is by downloading the free app from the App Store or Google Play Store on your smartphone. Just register with a few details and enter the following information when you want to pay:

Three easy steps

- Your number plate (with no spaces).
- The 5-digit location code advertised on signs where you're parking.
- How long you want to park for.

Once you've paid, the council's Civil Enforcement Officers can see that you're parked with RingGo by checking each vehicle registration number on their handheld devices, so there's no need to display a ticket – which means you're actively helping the environment with less paper generated too! If you want to stay parked a bit longer, you can extend your existing parking session remotely via the app subject to maximum stays allowed on street and/or

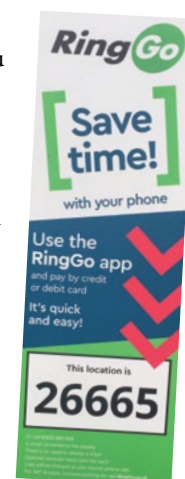
in our car parks. All you have to do is select your current session and enter how long you want to extend for.

No need to dash back to the parking machine either.

If you're not a smartphone user, you can call **01233 380090** (displayed on signs) to pay for your parking through RingGo.

You'll be able to register and extend your parking touch free using the same details as via the app. If you pre-register online at RingGo.co.uk it makes your call to park much quicker.

You can also choose to add RingGo's text receipts and reminders, confirming your session and alerting you when your parking is due to run out. There's a small charge for each of these messages but you can opt-in or out at any time.



For more information visit RingGo.co.uk

For more information about car parking services offered by the council visit www.ashford.gov.uk/parking

Prefer using cash? No problem. You can still use cash to pay for your parking in all of our car parks (most accept cards too).



Providing a Lifeline

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

What our users think of Lifeline:

95% great quality service

96% great value for money

96% great speed of response

Lifeline is a 24 hour personal security system providing an instant response at the touch of a button which could prove to be lifesaving in situations where you may not be able to answer the phone due to illness or injury.

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

Acting as your personal alarm that when pressed, Lifeline sends a signal direct to the Call Centre where operators can assist you via a built in microphone.

From there, operators will then be able to act on your behalf to access emergency services, let a family member or loved one know you are okay, or simply to offer any advice that you need.

The service automatically identifies where your call has come from and, as call handlers have instant access to your personal details, they can get help to you as soon as possible.



Affordable peace of mind

Lifeline is part of Ashford Borough Council and with over 25 years experience managing a community alarm service you can be sure you and your loved ones are in safe hands.



If you'd like to know more about Lifeline then **get in touch by visiting:**


www.ashford.gov.uk/lifeline

Phone: **01233 642095** or

Email: **lifeline@ashford.gov.uk**



Do it for your dog

Following messages from residents about issues they've been having with dog fouling in certain areas we've launched the '*Do It for Your Dog*' campaign to encourage those few who don't clean up their pet's mess to think again. 

Given the current circumstances, it's more important than ever to keep our outside spaces clean and pleasant. If keeping community spaces clean and tidy isn't an incentive enough, those caught failing to pick up after their pets could receive an on-the-spot fine!

Our Dog Warden and Street Scene team have already been out and about displaying posters and spray painting signs in places residents

have indicated to be hotspots, with the aim of making people stop and think before leaving their pet's mess behind.

Don't worry the spray is environmentally friendly and won't damage humans or animals, however not picking up after pets can have deadly consequences, so we're encouraging residents to bag it and bin it to keep the outdoors safe and clean for everyone.

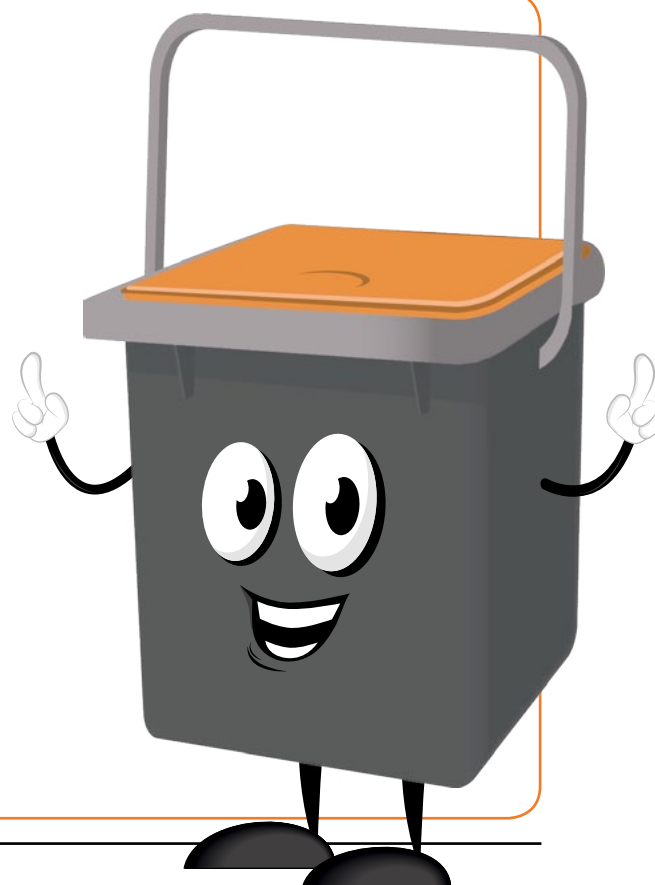


Feed your food bin

No one likes to waste food, wasting food isn't just bad for the planet it's bad for your pocket. Love Food Hate Waste have some great tips on their website including an A-Z guide on the best ways to store your food and keep it fresher for longer. Their website also has lots of simple food hacks and tips to help you learn how to reduce your food waste, from the moment you start thinking about shopping through to when you are cooking, preparing and serving your meals.

Inevitably however there will be times when food waste is unavoidable and when that happens we need you to feed your food bin!

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com





Sign up to our garden waste service today.

More time at home means more time in the garden which means lots of us will have spent happy hours tackling trellises and perfecting our pruning. However more gardening means more garden waste! The great news is that it's never been quicker or easier to sign up to our garden waste service.

We've introduced a new rolling contract system and when you sign up you can even opt in to receive regular gardening hints tips and offers!

If you're a current garden waste customer we're working to make the service even more efficient than it already is which means some customers' collection days will be changing. You'll receive a letter soon letting you know how these changes will affect you.

Sign up now – www.ashford.gov.uk/garden-waste

Water's Worth Saving

south east water

The way we're using water is changing, especially with more of us staying at home so we've partnered up with South East Water to prove that water really is worth saving.

In the coming months we'll be sharing ways you can save water, save money and save the planet all at the same time! Make sure you keep an eye on our social media channels but in the meantime why not check out South East Water's top tips on saving water in your garden.

www.southeastwater.co.uk/my-water-supply/save-water-save-money

Top tips to save water in the garden:

1. Water your pots and hanging baskets either early in the morning or during the evening to reduce evaporation in the midday sun.
2. If you're potting up or planting containers, use ones made from plastic, glazed terracotta or wood. These tend to lose less water than bare terracotta.
3. Bury a short length of pipe into your pot; if you water into the tube the water goes directly to the roots where the plant needs it most.
4. Use mulches like bark chips or gravel to retain moisture and keep weeds down.
5. Remember – brown lawns bounce back.
6. Top up the paddling pool instead of refilling it every day. When you're finished, use the water on your plants and grass so none goes to waste.
7. Invest in a water butt for your garden and use the harvested water on your plants (they grow better with rain water and you'll save money on your water bill too).



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at Ashford Designer Outlet

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WIN a one night stay at Romney Marsh Shepherd's Huts.



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Rushfield, Giggers Green Road, Aldington, Kent, TN25 7BT. Tel: 01233 721800
www.romneymarshshepherdshuts.co.uk
info@romneymarshshepherdshuts.co.uk

Prize is a one night stay in one of our Romney Marsh Shepherd's Huts for two people, Monday - Wednesday which may be redeemed until 30 April 2021, subject to availability. Additional nights may be booked at the standard rate.

To enter your name in our prize draw either:

* Email the editorial team at competition@ashford.gov.uk – put Romney Marsh Shepherd's Huts 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 Romney Marsh Shepherd's Huts Competition Entry on the card.

We will contact the winner to request consent to provide your contact details to Romney Marsh Shepherd's Huts to enable you to claim your prize.

- Terms & conditions apply: 1. The competition is open to UK residents aged 18 years or older except employees of the Promoter, their families, agents or any third party associated with the competition.
 2. The closing date of the competition is 12 noon on Friday 9 October. Entries received after this time will not be included. The prize is non-transferable and non-refundable. There are no cash alternatives.
 3. By accepting the prize you also agree to be bound by Romney Marsh Shepherd's Huts standard terms and conditions.

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THIS...
Autumn



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