



ASHFORD

Issue 16 | Spring 2022

FOR YOU

YOUR BOROUGH, YOUR MAGAZINE

QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

Countdown to a glorious celebration

ALL CHANGE FOR ASHFORD

ASHFORD IN BLOOM



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- Wine tour of Kent
- Designer Outlet vouchers



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The logo for ABC Lettings, featuring the letters 'abc' in a lowercase, sans-serif font. Above the letters is a stylized green house icon with an upward-pointing arrow. Below the letters is the tagline 'A BETTER CHOICE FOR LETTINGS' in a smaller, uppercase font.

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Welcome



Welcome to the spring edition of *Ashford For You*, an edition that is packed with great features and interesting news about what's happening across the borough – helping

to provide a ray of sunshine as we emerge from the chilly winter.

Everywhere you look there are uplifting stories, green shoots if you like – including our parks and other lovely green spaces (Victoria Park feature), exciting cultural events (railway heritage show and Queen's Platinum Jubilee), colourful gardens competition (Ashford in Bloom) and much more.

There's a clear sense of new beginnings in the air, reflected in the launch of an exciting new borough lottery that will generate much-needed new funds for local charities. Nowhere are new beginnings more welcome than among the many Afghan evacuees who have been temporarily homed in Ashford before going on to more permanent accommodation in the UK as part of the Government's emergency evacuation of those Afghans who served our armed forces so loyally before Taliban forces swept to power.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition, and if you have any ideas and suggestions for future features please drop us a line (see contacts below). And do find time to enter our reader competitions – as usual there are some fabulous prizes to be won.

Tracey Kerly

Chief executive, Ashford Borough Council

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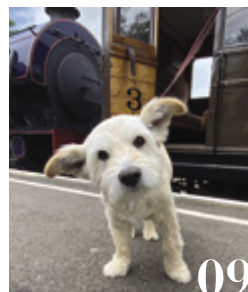
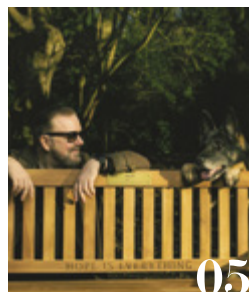
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Email: media@ashford.gov.uk (subject line NEWS) or

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

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or write to us at the above address.

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

Good things come in trees

As part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, Aspire Landscape Management has been working hard over the winter to plant the first 30,000 tree saplings.

This is in line with our pledge to plant one tree for every resident of Ashford, which will see 135,000 trees being planted over the next two years.

Community-spirited volunteer residents and volunteer tree wardens have now joined the Aspire team in the monumental task of planting these trees and creating mini plantations of densely planted native trees species. The project has seen mini plantations created in a number of open spaces, including Bentley Road, Little Burton, William Road, Cuckoo Woods and Watercress Fields.

Parish councils have been invited to participate, by creating their own planting schemes during the winter. Each parish council have had the opportunity to apply to have as many trees as their site(s) will accommodate.



Aspire is ready and waiting to offer support on creating native tree plantations within parish areas to enhance the environment and green spaces, increase biodiversity and strengthen the local community by improving health and wellbeing.

Parish councils are being encouraged to engage with residents and schools so that they can get involved with this initiative. The project will create a living legacy for everyone living in the borough, a legacy that will continue to provide environmental and community benefits for many years to come.

If you want to get involved with the tree planting, register your interest at www.ashford.gov.uk/green-canopy

Going green in Tenterden

Tenterden Town Council will be drawing up a Climate Action Plan for 2022. It is planning to organise a workshop, following which a Vision statement and a plan of action will be produced.

The council wants to be carbon neutral by 2030 and as part of this ambitious target is looking to refurbish the Town Hall with better insulation, an air source heat pump, solar panels, LED lighting and upgraded draught-proofing. It has already taken positive steps forward in this area but is aiming to go further this year.

'Plastic-free' is another key ambition, with a focus on avoidable single use plastic. Work is planned on education, awareness, and behaviour change, bringing together local schools, businesses and community groups to drive action on reducing single use plastics. The council is looking at securing funding and is putting together a mission statement.

Breathe *easy*

Councils across Kent have relaunched a website which aims to provide residents and visitors with up-to-date information about levels of air pollution across the county.

High levels of air pollution can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing and those who suffer from heart and lung problems, such as asthma, are more likely to experience negative health effects when pollution levels are increased.

Residents can also sign up to receive forecasts of when air pollution is likely to be high, enabling them to reduce their exposure. To find out more visit www.kentair.org.uk.



Fun, freedom & friendship

Spring means one thing for the Woodchurch Driving Group RDA – the chance once more to get out and enjoy driving their carriages in the beautiful fields, woods and the outdoor arena.

The Woodchurch group is an independent charity affiliated to the National Association for Riding for the Disabled (including carriage driving). It is made up of adult drivers with a range of disabilities, companion drivers and volunteers.

Our common bond is the three ponies who give so much to everyone. They have the ability to instill confidence and a sense of personal achievement. The group meets twice weekly on a Monday and Wednesday from spring to autumn.

Drivers enjoy honing their skills, competing against each other and at shows, while others just love being with the ponies, learning how to groom and care for them and taking part in games. For many this is their only social outlet and is a chance to forge new friendships. The sense of freedom this gives them, even when confined to a wheelchair, is priceless.

Fundraising for the ponies' upkeep and equipment is achieved with events and social gatherings.

The pandemic hit the 2020 season and the group was inactive until June 2021. That season ended on a high when two drivers were placed second and joint third in the virtual National Championships novice dressage test. New volunteers and drivers can contact www.rdawoodchurch.co.uk. Prior experience is not essential, as training will be given.



United's new signing

A tree designed by Phoebe Clark-Tate, aged 11, is Ashford United's new mascot. *Ash the Tree* was inspired by Ashford's name, meaning ash trees near a river, and was created by Phoebe of Smeeth Community Primary School, who won a competition to find a new mascot.



Competition winners

More than 660 entries were received for our two fantastic competitions in the last issue. The winner of the Woodchurch wines and vineyard tour is Joy Munday, while enjoying a Macknade Best of Kent hamper is Hazel Hover and Chris Razzell. Thanks to everyone who took part – see page 22 for our latest competitions.

Tenterden market

The popular Friday High Street Market will be returning to Tenterden from March. The market will be in Tenterden High Street on the second and fourth Friday of each month from 9am until 2pm.

The rejuvenated market will include high quality traders to complement the fantastic shops already on offer. For more details, visit High Street Market at www.tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk.



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Learn, laugh, live

Looking to keep mentally fit and physically active in your retirement but don't know where to go? The Ashford, Wye and District u3a organisation offers a range of engaging opportunities for just £20 a year for the retired or semi-retired.

Created in 2010, there are now 32 groups across the district offering educational and social activities, from history and art to dancing and cookery, with an emphasis on what it means to have a positive later life.

Members can learn more about things that already interest them or choose a subject or pastime they've always wanted to try. The range of offerings include singing, table tennis, scrabble, day trips, gardening, card crafting, play-reading and yoga. Like-minded members can also enjoy specific groups for art, books, current affairs and organised walking.

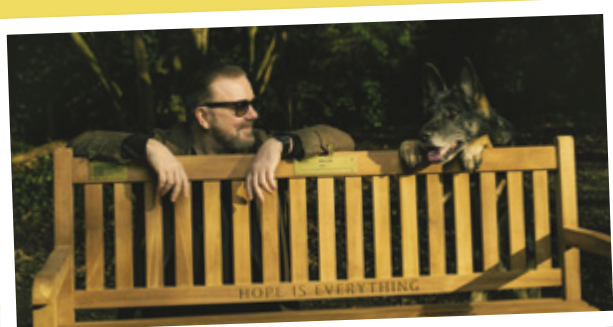


If you are interested in joining, a welcoming monthly coffee morning with entertaining speakers takes place at Repton Connect Community Centre. For more information contact Aileen Dickson at u3amembershipashford@outlook.com or Barry Andrews at chairmanu3aashford@outlook.com. A full list of activities is available online at www.u3asites.org.uk/ashford-wye/groups

Hope is everything

TV series *After Life* is renowned for its scenes showing Ricky Gervais's leading character, Tony, on a churchyard bench as he grieves for his wife Lisa. To mark the launch of the final series, Netflix donated 25 benches to local councils around the UK to create a space for communities to visit.

One of these benches has been installed at Victoria Park, Ashford. The benches have been commissioned alongside suicide prevention charity Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), who offer help and information to anyone struggling or in crisis. Those who visit a bench during this temporary project will be able to access info from CALM.



Supporting our twin town

The Twinning Association has issued a heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who donated and took part in the fundraising efforts for our twin town Bad Münstereifel, which suffered devastating floods last summer.

An amazing £13,844 was raised and will be going to two nursery schools and a primary school to help replace items which are not covered by State Aid or insurance. Our photo shows the Mayor Cllr Callum Knowles, Ashford Twinning Association's Chair Peter Cocks, Twinning Champion Cllr Matthew Forest, the Kent Representative for The British-German Association, Peter Brown, members, and supporters at the Friendship Stone in Ashford town centre.



50 years of listening

This year marks 50 years of listening by Ashford and Tenterden Samaritans at their Queen Street branch. Samaritans across the UK take over three and a half million calls a year, that's 10,000 calls a day; anyone can need help at anytime and Samaritans are there 24/7 to listen and support those in need.

To celebrate the anniversary and to raise awareness and funds and to encourage more volunteers to join this amazing charity, events are being planned throughout 2022. For more details visit www.samaritans.org/ashford or follow us on Twitter @AshfordSams.

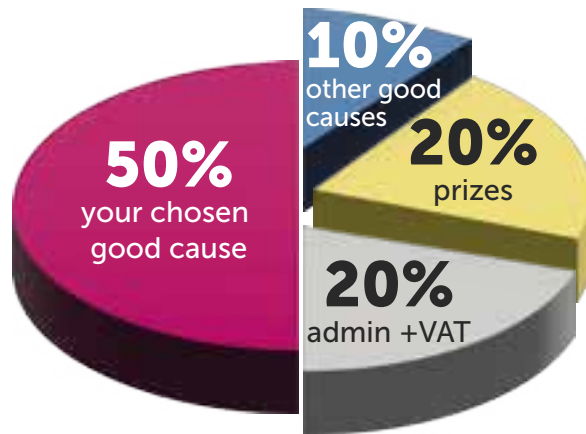
Ashford Community Lottery launches!

Do you want to support charities and good causes based in the Ashford borough AND stand a chance of winning up to £25,000?

The Ashford Community Lottery has a weekly jackpot prize of £25,000, however you can win smaller prizes for matching the first or last two to five numbers. And tickets cost just £1! The online draw takes place at 8pm on Saturdays, starting from 19 March 2022. For more information and to purchase tickets visit www.ashfordcommunitylottery.co.uk.

Where does your £1 ticket money go?

Each ticket costs £1, with 50p going to the player's chosen good cause. A further 10p of each ticket will go into a general community fund which the council will use to support a range of local initiatives. The remaining 40p will go towards prizes, operating costs and VAT.



Do you want to raise a regular income for your organisation?

If you are a voluntary or community sector organisation (good causes in lottery terms) delivering activities or services to residents in the Ashford borough you can register to take part at: www.ashfordcommunitylottery.co.uk/good-causes

Ashford
COMMUNITY
Lottery

Contact the Ashford Community Lottery team:
Email – support@AshfordCommunityLottery.co.uk Call - 01233 514015

Players must be 16 or over and physically located in the UK
Always play responsibly, if you need to talk to someone about your gambling, contact Gamble Aware at: www.begambleaware.org
Ashford Community Lottery, promoted by Ashford Borough Council, a Local Authority Lottery licensed by the Gambling Commission
www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk
Gambling Commission Account No: 58563
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Creative team: The creative team at a brainstorming event in the Cornstore, at the Coachworks, Ashford. From left to right, Max Philo (filmmaker), Gavin MacArthur (projection mappist), Stephen Israel (director), Suzi Hopkins (playwright), Jo Compton (administrator), George Dersley (filmmaker), Mike Simmonds (musical director) & Sorcha Corcoran (theatre designer)



A freight day for a play

Theatre lovers rejoice, as the premiere of the site-specific play *All Change for Ashford* will take place this spring offering a glance at the history of Ashford and its railways, with music and projected film.

Performed by a cast of professional actor musicians based from Ashford and Kent, the play will focus on the borough's proud railway roots from the very first days of steam to the present day.

An action-packed two-hour performance will depart from Revelation Ashford, stop by County Square Shopping Centre before a high-speed finale at Elwick Place with choirs, a concert band and large-scale projections.

Showcasing Ashford's best

This production utilises many of the wonderful artistic and technical skills that our borough has to offer. Film will be provided by Modus Films, with projection mapping at Revelation Ashford created by Ashford-based Gavin MacArthur, creative director of immersive experience pioneers Pixel Artworks.



Ashford tales: The actors Stephen Israel, Gudfinnar Runarsdottir (local Ashford actress) and Michael Simmonds in the site-specific play *The Canterbury Ashford Tales*, which took place all around central Ashford in 2017

Music will be performed courtesy of five community choirs (Ashford Invicta Singers, Sing Sure Community Choir, St Mary's Church Choir, SOS Ashford Choir and Wayward Harmonies), and this will be supplemented by the Ashford Concert Band and the actors and musicians.

Students from Ashford College will also participate in the project through volunteering as assistant stage managers, tech crew and stewards.

The event is produced by The Company (www.thecompanyuk.com) and was commissioned and supported by Ashford Borough Council. There is further support from Arts Council England, Kent Community Foundation (Frank Brake Charitable Trust Fund), Community Rail Network, Keltbray Foundation, Southeast Community Rail Partnership, John Booth Foundation and Great Chart Primary School.

When and how to watch

Performances will take place at 7.30pm on 28, 29 and 30 April, and 5, 6 and 7 May.

Tickets are available from Revelation Ashford for £8 (adult), £4 (u16/concessions) and £20 (family).

To book visit www.revelationashford.co.uk or call **01233 663201**.

For more information about the event visit www.thecompanyuk.com or contact admin@thecompanyuk.com

Please note: This accessible-friendly production requires members of the audience to move from venue to venue. The last venue is out in the open, so please dress appropriately.

What's On



Revel in comedy and music at Revelation

If you need a good laugh then Revelation St Mary's has got you covered with its popular Comedy Network nights and a rare chance to see Dom Joly. Meanwhile folk fans can enjoy marvellous musical delights in March...

The Comedy Network

Come and unwind at one of Revelation's Comedy Network comedy club shows on 25 March and 22 April. Bring your friends, grab a drink from the bar and enjoy laugh out loud comedy from some of the hottest comedians around.

Dom Joly is best known as the creator of Trigger Happy TV, and now the writer and broadcaster is undertaking his first UK tour since 2011, giving fans a rare opportunity to see him live on 9 April. In Dom Joly's Holiday Snaps, he'll be talking about his exploits as a serial globe-trotter and seeker of dangerous travel spots – from North Korea to the Congo and Syria to Chernobyl. Dom will meet fans after the show to sign copies of his latest book, *The Hezbollah Hiking Club*.



Fabulous folk

Dispatches on the Red Dress is an intimate new solo show by twice BBC Radio 2 Folk Award-winning songwriter Rowan Rheingans. A Fringe First award-winner at 2019's Edinburgh Fringe Festival, adventurous new writing meets the warmth of a folk gig in this heartfelt and personal one-woman show, weaving immersive storytelling with live fiddle, banjo and original songs taken from Rowan's new genre-melding debut solo album *The Lines We Draw Together* (The Guardian's Folk Album of the Month). She takes to the stage on 12 March.

For a man still in his twenties, Blair Dunlop (left) is at the top of his game. His debut album *Blight & Blossom* won the coveted Horizon Award at the 2013 BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, his 2010 debut EP is now a collector's item. It could be easy to rest on his laurels but that's certainly not the case; constantly searching for new sounds and techniques, Blair's latest music sounds unlike any of his previous releases and you have the chance to hear it on 16 March.

Enjoy home grown talent on 23 March with Lucy Farrell – a songwriter, folk singer and musician from Kent. An in-demand collaborator, she has been a member of influential folk acts including Eliza Carthy's Wayward Band, the Emily Portman Trio and Carthy, Oates, Farrell & Young. As one quarter of The Furrow Collective she won the Best Band category at the BBC Folk Awards in 2018. Throughout this busy schedule Lucy stole time in hotels, motorway services and even a winter cabin retreat in Canada to build up a collection of sublime solo material with tenor guitar and violin.

For details on all these events head to www.revelationashford.co.uk

What's On All aboard!

Enjoy the rolling beauty of our local countryside with Kent & East Sussex Railway this spring...



Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 March

Mothers' Day specials by steam

Dine aboard a historic steam train and travel through the Weald for a return journey that's fun for all the family.

Saturday 2 to Sunday 17 April Easter Holidays

Climb aboard and enjoy the beauty of spring with its riot of colour, baby animals and birds and a special trail for families.

**April and May Historic steam and diesel train services
Tenterden to Bodiam**

Trains operating on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Enjoy flexibility with our Freedom tickets. With prices starting at £13.50, book online and save.

April Wine & Dine and Gin Specials!

Visit the website for dates and information.

Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 May 1940s weekend

Dress up in your vintage finery or come along and soak up the live entertainment, trade stalls, food and drink and steam trains.

Find out more at www.kesr.org.uk



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What's On

A long weekend of celebration and commemoration



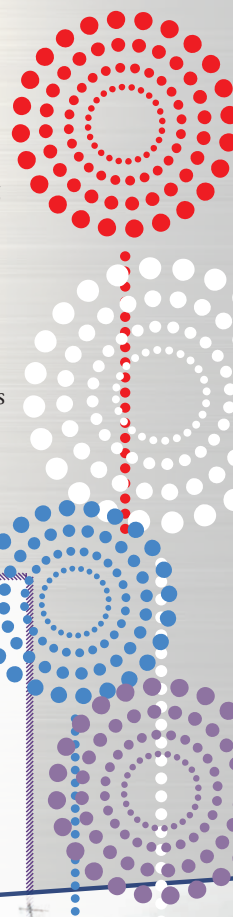
Ashford Borough Council is planning a long weekend of celebrations and commemorations in June 2022 to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as well as the 80th anniversary of HMS Albacore, Warship Week and the Ashford Sea Cadets.



Ashford Tree Trail

A community arts project for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Year, the Ashford Tree Trail is a wonderful tribute to Her Majesty. Working with Animate Arts, we'll be inviting residents from every generation to create decorations (using recycled materials) to celebrate the Queen's achievements which will then be hung on wooden and real trees during the Jubilee weekend. Visitors can use a map to follow the trail around the town centre.

Decorations will be made at school or community workshops or a creative pack can be downloaded for residents or community groups to use to decorate their own trees. They can then send in their photos to be added to a virtual tree map of the borough. We're aiming to have at least 70 virtual trees – one for every year of the Queen's reign!



The Big Lunch

The Big Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5 June

has been chosen as the official community celebration for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend and is your chance to celebrate community connections and get to know one another a little better with a street party.

If you want to organise your own then visit our website where you'll find details on how to get hold of a free Big Lunch pack, links to government guidance on organising a street party and their Platinum Jubilee website with interactive event map as well as advice on whether you need a licence, road closure notification, and if you require insurance: www.ashford.gov.uk/jubilee-street-parties



Jubilee and Albacore Events

Thursday 2 June 2022

Beacon lighting (part of the nationwide lighting of beacons) from 9pm in Civic Park, Ashford.

Friday 3 June 2022

The Mayor of Ashford's Thanksgiving Service for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, at 1.45pm in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Ashford. All welcome.

Saturday 4 June 2022

HMS Albacore Celebrations with the Ashford Sea Cadets in Memorial Gardens, including the dedication of a new memorial, the Albacore flag and a commemorative service from 10.15am.



Sunday 5 June 2022

Residents and community groups encouraged to hold their own street parties. A Big Jubilee Lunch is planned in Victoria Park.

For information visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/jubilee-and-albacore-events

Jubilee joy in Tenterden

There will be many exciting activities in Tenterden over the four days of national celebration, including the beacon lighting on the Rec on Thursday 2 June and a special exhibition in the Town Hall. For updates see www.tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk



Ashford in Bloom

Winners

It was a tough job judging some of the best entries we've ever received but after thinking long and hard we've got our Ashford in Bloom 2021 winners! And here they are...

Whe Mayor of Ashford, Cllr Callum Knowles helped with the judging and he said: "The standard of entries in the competition was exceptional. With the focus on reusing,

reducing and recycling, we were delighted to receive a record number of high quality entries. A special word of thanks to those companies who have donated great prizes, we're grateful for their generosity."



Best front or back garden

The winner is **Jean and Ian Clifton**

The prize is a £50 voucher donated by **Longacres Bybrook Barn garden centre** plus an **Ashford Borough Council free garden waste collection service for a year**



Most environmentally friendly garden

The winner is **Nikkii Griffith**

The prize is a **Godinton House & Gardens season ticket and a cream tea for two**; plus an **Ashford Borough Council free garden waste collection service for a year**





Best window box

The winner is **Jean Wills**

The prize is gardening equipment donated by **Ashford Wilkos store**

Best indoor garden

The winner is **Sarah Mabb**

The prize is **£50 Homebase voucher** donated by **ENGIE**

Best communal garden

The winner is **Farrow Court**

The prize is a **£50 National Gardening voucher** and a garden water butt donated by **South East Water**



Best Young Gardener U-14

The winner is **Joshua Austin**

The prize is a **£50 Waitrose/John Lewis voucher**



Best Balcony

The winner is **Andy Clark**

The prize is **fine English wine** donated by **Biddenden Vineyards**





With the easing of lockdown household food waste has begun to rise again as people fall back into old habits. Which is why we need you to get on board for 2022 and prevent food being thrown away needlessly.

There is a huge environmental impact caused by chucking away good food. Not only the greenhouse gases created by producing the food that ends up not being used, but also the resources it takes to bring that food to you – water, land, energy, transport and hard labour.

Not only is food waste bad for the environment, it hits you in the pocket too. Did you know the average Ashford family throws away £720 of edible food every year!

We have pulled together three simple tips to help minimise food waste in your home. We are all busy so let's be realistic, making just one change can make a huge difference:

- 1 Plan your shopping and get more for your money – use a portion planner and food diary.
- 2 Make your food last longer – freezing your food can minimise waste and can result in another dinner ticked off the list.
- 3 Get more from your shopping and use what you buy – try experimenting with leftovers to make meals.

For more tips to reduce your food waste have a look at Love Food Hate Waste website www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

If food waste can't be avoided then it should be put in your black and orange food caddy. To get bin-spiration and find out what you can put in your food caddy check out www.ashford.gov.uk/food-waste

Food waste collected in the caddy is a useful resource that is turned into compost and energy, helping to power homes in Kent.



Garden Waste?

Save a trip to the tip

Want to save a trip to the tip? Or develop green fingers ready to enjoy your garden this year? Then sign up to our garden waste service today. It has never been quicker or easier to sign up to our collection service, leaving you more time to enjoy your outdoor space. Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/garden-waste

Great British Spring Clean

The countdown is on for this year's Great British Spring Clean from **24 March-10 April**.

Clean-ups will be taking place up and down the country and we are inviting residents, businesses, schools and community groups to become #litterheroes and get involved by running community litter picks. You can find all the information on how to arrange, hire equipment and guidance on our website www.ashford.gov.uk/community-litter-pick



SAVE THE PLANET



Litter Lotto

Nationally more than two million pieces of litter are dropped every day! Despite Ashford Borough Council emptying over 1,230 litter bins a week and spending large sums on street cleansing across the borough, litter is still a problem.

Which is why we are promoting Litter Lotto, which encourages people to bin their own litter. The app gives users the chance to win thousands of instant cash prizes each month, from £5 to £250, as well as the jackpot. All you have to do is simply bin your litter. All litter counts, from a single cigarette stub to a takeaway meal box. With every piece of litter binned you get another entry and more chances to win prizes.



The Big Tidy



Binrastructure at Stanhope

Have you seen these new bins around Stanhope in Ashford? Last year the council won a grant from the Resource Action Fund to look at Binrastructure in the area. Working closely with Moat Housing and Morgan Sindall, we have managed to replace and re-site 40 litter bins to ensure there is a uniformed bin for the area and we have increased bin capacity locally by 22%. Installation was completed in December and we have already had a positive response from residents.

The Big Tidy

We hosted several Big Tidy events last year in Ashford town centre and Stanhope collecting more than 26 bags of litter, cleaning the bandstand and painted bollards. With over 40 volunteers from a mix of generations we thank you for coming out in force to help clean up your communities.

It's simple to take part in a Big Tidy event – all you do is turn up and get tidying, so why not come along to the next one in your area? You can find more information on the Big Tidy and upcoming events at www.ashford.gov.uk/litter-free-ashford



The Big Tidy



The Big Tidy

Get to grips with Climate Action



Let's face it, science is not everyone's cup of tea and when we talk about climate change there is an overwhelming amount of information to get to grips with.

Scientists have been talking about climate change and the 'greenhouse effect' for decades, but do we fully understand what it means or what we need to do to help?

That's why we are going to make a pledge to the planet and break down this huge and sometimes confusing subject throughout the year into bite-sized chunks, focussing on one topic at a time so you can feel more knowledgeable and empowered to help where you can.

So what is meant by climate change/global warming?

"The process of our planet heating up which causes changes to the weather/climate mainly due to the increased levels of carbon dioxide in the air, produced by the use of fossil fuels"

Small changes you make in your home can not only make a huge difference to help minimise climate change, but also save energy and lower your bills.

Here are our top three tips:

1. **Turn off your lights** when you're not using them or when you leave a room – this can save you around £14 a year on your annual energy bills.
2. **Wash your clothes on a 30-degree cycle** instead of higher – this can save you around £10 a year on energy bills.
3. **Aim to keep your shower time to just four minutes** – this could save you around £45 a year on energy bills and further savings on water!

For more tips on how to be more energy efficient visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy

Make sure you keep an eye on the council's social media channels throughout the year for information and tips on what you can do to help the planet.

Save the
PLANET



Park website goes live

The Victoria Park and Watercress Fields Project funded by the National Lottery Heritage fund has its own website which showcases the park's heritage and ecology and provides information and updates.



The 'What's on' section hosts the events calendar as well as ticket booking for events. See the 'get involved' section for listings for volunteering opportunities and details of activities for young people, schools and youth groups.

A Frequently Asked Questions page answers some of the regularly received enquiries by the project team. The website includes a news blog that will be regularly updated as well as the option to sign up for blog alerts and an email newsletter.

Learn more about the park and spark your creativity with downloadable artistic resources as well as craft videos to watch and follow at home in the resources section.



The project team would love to feature the work of photographers and artists that use the park as inspiration. If you have an image that you would like to give the project team permission to use online, email victoriapark@ashford.gov.uk or pop a message in the contact form on the website at www.victoriaparkashford.co.uk

Big Jubilee Lunch

The Victoria Park Project is hosting our first Big Lunch on Sunday 5 June at Watercress Fields as part of the Jubilee weekend celebrations. Big Lunch is an initiative from Eden Project Communities connecting people living in the same area and forms part of their 'Month of Community' celebrations.

It's an event about food and festivities traditionally run by local volunteers and while the Victoria Park Project is happy to facilitate the first two years of events, we will

need a crew of people to form an organising group. This will ensure that the event is able to continue beyond the project and thrive in the longer term.

So if you're interested in bringing the community together in an annual celebration of food and fun, email Victoria.fannon@ashford.gov.uk to discuss. If you want to have your say but are not able to commit any time, just scan the QR code and leave a message on our Patchwork page. We'd love to hear your views!



How we deliver services for you

Where our funding comes from and the services we deliver

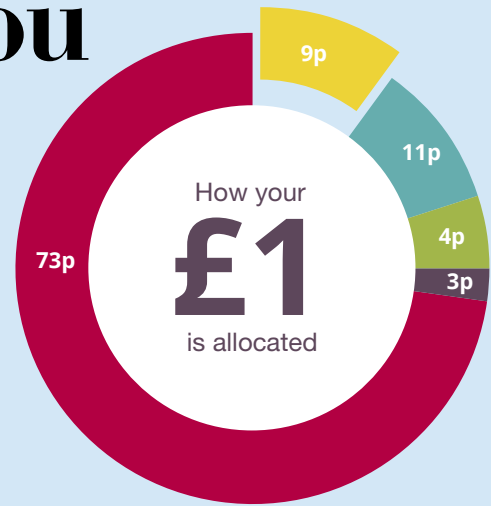
The council tax you pay helps provide local public services, such as policing and recycling collections, but do you know exactly what it is spent on?

The amount you pay is determined by the value of your property (though this is currently based on its value in 1991). Councils issue each household with an annual bill every March.

Ashford Borough Council collects your council tax but we are not the only ones who use it. For example, did you know that 73% of your bill goes to Kent County Council?

Central government no longer provides direct funding support to help us fund the services we provide for you. Therefore councils have to look to alternative sources of income, one of which is increasing council tax levels.

In order for us to maintain the same quality of service, and keep up with increased costs like inflation, we need to increase the amount we charge you for council tax. This ensures we do not have a budget gap and do not have to cut back on services or stop them altogether.



- Kent County Council
- Ashford Borough Council
- Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Kent Fire and Rescue Services
- Parish Councils

How every £1 of your council tax is allocated

You can see that above Ashford Borough Council receives nine pence out of every £1 of council tax you pay.

For more information about council tax visit: www.ashford.gov.uk/council-tax
To set up a direct debit visit www.ashford.gov.uk/pay or call 01233 330227.



What your council tax is spent on

These are just some of our services:

Economic growth and job creation

Electoral services, including voter registration

Recycling and refuse collections

Rent, business rates and tax collection

Leisure facilities, play areas, parks and open spaces

Youth and arts services and events

Reducing homelessness and other housing advice/support

Licensing, street trading, hackney carriage taxi licences

Preserving trees, grass cutting and street cleansing

Grants, funding for community projects

Preventing fly-tipping and graffiti

Support for the voluntary and community sector

Food hygiene inspections

Managing borough council-owned car parks

Planning applications and advice on building regulations

Our communications channels

Askford has the lowest
council tax in Kent

The easiest way to pay your
council tax is by direct debit.
Spread the cost over 10 months.



Ensuring an equal voice

Reaching out to the community, so we hear from everyone

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. The council also has a duty to consider all individuals when carrying out our work. We do this via our Equalities Policy, which is currently out for consultation.

We include how we treat everyone fairly and with respect, understand and respond to the needs of our communities to ensure no one is disadvantaged, put the customer at the heart of everything we do and ensure our services are accessible. Examples include providing Changing Places facilities or play parks built with accessibility in mind.



It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of their: Age, Race, Disability, Sexual orientation, Religion or belief, Sex, Gender reassignment and Pregnancy and maternity.

Have your say:

Visit www.ashford.gov.uk/consult to have your say. If you would like receive it in an alternative language or format please email corporatepolicy.team@ashford.gov.uk

आफ़्नो भनाइ जनाउनुहोस्

आफ़्नो भनाइ प्रकट गर्न www.ashford.gov.uk/consult मा जानुहोस्। यदि तपाईं यसलाई वैकल्पिक भाषा वा ढाँचामा प्राप्त गर्न चाहनुहुन्छ भने, कृपया corporatepolicy.team@ashford.gov.uk मा इमेल गर्नुहोस्।

Zabierz głos

Wejdź na stronę www.ashford.gov.uk/consult, żeby zabrać głos. Jeśli chciałbyś otrzymać dokument w innym języku lub formacie, skontaktuj się z corporatepolicy.team@ashford.gov.uk

अपनी बात रखें

अपनी बात रखने के लिए www.ashford.gov.uk/consult पर जाएं। यदि आप इसे किसी और भाषा या प्रारूप में प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं तो कृपया इस पते पर ईमेल करें companypolicy.team@ashford.gov.uk

Make your voice heard...

As the borough grows, so does the diversity within our community, so we're reaching out to individuals and groups, and especially those we have never heard from before.

If you would like to know more about Ashford Access or you think there are other groups or viewpoints we should be hearing from please let us know by emailing corporatepolicy.team@ashford.gov.uk.

Making accessing our services easier

SignLive

British Sign Language users can use the SignLive service to have a call with our customer services team interpreted by a professional.

Alternative formats

If you need information in a different format (e.g. accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille) email: accessibility@ashford.gov.uk or call 01233 331111 – then press option 9.

Making our website accessible for all

There are a number of ways to make it easier to use our website. You can change the colours, contrast levels and fonts size easily. You can also navigate most of the site using speech recognition software and listen via a screen reader.

Our equality objectives

1



Improve our understanding of our diverse communities in all that we do.

2



Encourage all residents to have a say in the decisions that affect them and get involved in their local communities.

3



Deliver services and customer care to meet the needs of all our residents.

4



Deliver organisational change to enable a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

For more information visit:

www.ashford.gov.uk/our-equalities-objectives
www.ashford.gov.uk/consult
www.ashford.gov.uk/accessibility-statement

Our big-hearted borough

The response of council staff, residents and businesses to the plight of evacuees from Afghanistan has again demonstrated the compassion and kindness that was first in evidence when the borough began to welcome Syrian refugees in 2015.

When Kabul fell – and fearful of violent reprisals by vengeful Taliban forces – there was a scramble to evacuate thousands of individuals and their families who had worked with our armed forces and British government in Afghanistan.

Ashford Borough Council was one of the first to react to the fast-emerging humanitarian catastrophe, pledging to permanently rehome up to ten Afghan evacuee families in the first year, as part of a Government permanent resettlement scheme.

The first three families arrived soon after and have settled in well, with one man completing a community interpreter course ahead of securing employment. All the children are in school and there's even a new baby due soon! More Afghan families are expected to arrive soon as part of this scheme.

Separately, a hotel in the Ashford borough was chosen by the Home Office to temporarily house Afghan families while efforts continued to find them a more permanent home in the UK. It's one of around 80 'bridging hotels' contracted by the Home Office to provide a temporary home to thousands of evacuees.

Providing welfare support

The council has been in the forefront of supporting the project, with staff volunteering to provide welfare and wellbeing support, overseeing medical assistance, including mental health support for some left traumatised by their experiences in fleeing Afghanistan.

At any one time there have been around 140 Afghan men, women and children living at the hotel, with families leaving to be permanently rehomed elsewhere being replaced with new families who have been evacuated to the UK from neighbouring countries to Afghanistan, where they had fled.

All the children are in school, pre-school provision has been organised, and language learning and adult education services have been provided by Kent County Council, Ashford College and Concept Training. A huge effort is ongoing to prepare the Afghans for life in the UK, with sessions designed to open their eyes to British culture, how society works and what's expected of them as citizens.



Cllr Gerry Clarkson accepts the laptops on behalf of our Afghan evacuees from Dammar Singhak Limbu, senior vice chairman, Sagarmatha Gurkha Nepalese Community Ashford Kent (SGNCAK). Looking on are Ashford's deputy mayor, Cllr Jenny Webb (left), chief executive Tracey Kerly and SGNCAK chairman Ka Prasad Chantyal www.sgncak.com

The council receives funding from the Home Office to cover the costs of this support, ensuring there is no financial burden on the services we provide. The Home Office has extended the contract to use the Ashford hotel, so our support for the Afghans living there will continue well into 2022.

Overwhelmed by donations

Big-hearted local residents and organisations greeted the news that Afghan evacuees had arrived in the borough by donating huge amounts of clothing, toiletries and toys. Any surplus was shared with charities.

Businesses also helped; Kings barbers in Ashford visited the hotel to provide free haircuts for the men and boys, while Ashford College invited a group of women to come and meet their students and enjoy their own hairdressing appointments. Members of the local Nepalese community raised money to buy laptops to help the Afghan children living in the hotel with their schoolwork.



Council Leader Cllr Gerry Clarkson said: "The response from residents to the arrival of our Afghan friends has been magnificent. Our hard-working staff have been overwhelmed by the generosity shown by people and on their behalf I'd like to thank everyone for their support.

"We talk about ourselves as a caring borough and it's at times like this that we realise just how important that is as we help these people come to terms with the traumatic events they have lived through."

WIN

a Full Day Wine Tour of Kent



Join us for a Wine Tour of Kent where we will visit three of Kent's beautiful Vineyards and wineries for a day wine tasting among the vines. Come and explore three vineyards with us, with wine tasting at each stop. Learn about how English wine is made along the way! The day includes a traditional country pub lunch and your own private wine guide to look after you throughout the day!

The prize is for two people and with us providing the transport, you don't have the hassle of deciding who will be the designated driver!

For more information visit www.winetoursofkent.co.uk or call **01580 438012**.



Sign up to the brand new McArthurGlen Club and be in with a chance of winning a **£200 gift card**

Fancy having a spending spree on McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Ashford while walking in a beautiful open air centre which houses Europe's largest living wall and over 90 designer brands at up to 60% less?

All you need to do is sign up to our brand new McArthurGlen Club by 12pm on Thursday 7 April 2022, for a chance to win a £200 gift card to spend at the Ashford Designer Outlet and be the first to hear about any exclusive offers and events. Sign up now by visiting www.mcarthurglen.com/formagazinecompetition



To enter your name into our Wine Tours of Kent draw only either:

- * Email the editorial team at competition@ashford.gov.uk – put **Wine Tours of Kent competition** in the subject heading and include your full name, postal address and email. Please include a contact phone number.
- * Send a postcard or sealed envelope with your name, address, email and contact phone number to: *Ashford For You* magazine, Communications, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1PL. Write **Wine Tours of Kent competition entry** on the card. We will contact the winners to request consent to provide your contact details to Wine Tours of Kent to enable you to claim your prize.

Terms & conditions: 1. The competition is open to UK residents aged 18 years or older except employees of the Promoter, their families, agents or any third party associated with the competition. 2. The closing date of the competition is **12 noon on Thursday 7 April 2022**. Entries received after this time will not be included. The prizes are non-transferable and non-refundable. There are no cash alternatives. 3. By accepting the prize you also agree to be bound by standard terms and conditions specified by the prize providers. Only one entry per person. Editor's decision is final.

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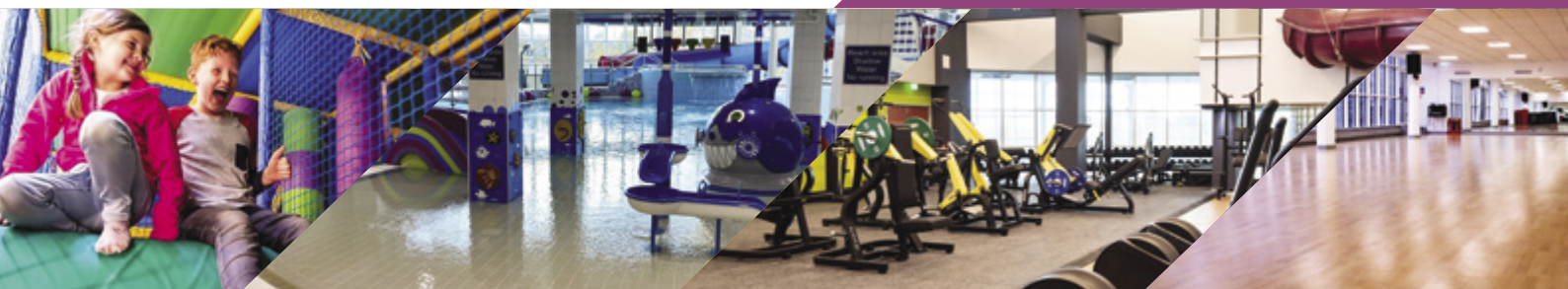
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