

ASHFORD

Issue 8 | Spring 2020

FOR YOU

YOUR BOROUGH, YOUR MAGAZINE

ROYAL STAMP OF APPROVAL

The Princess Royal opens Danemore



WIN

- Eurostar tickets
- London Beach Hotel spa break

WHAT'S ON THIS SPRING

TOURISM MATTERS



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Weddings | Events | Accommodation | Restaurant | Conferences



A delightful hotel, set in the heart of the 'Garden of England' with a renowned restaurant all within a welcoming environment.



Little Silver is a delightful privately owned traditional hotel, with strikingly impressive contemporary features offering a personable service and attention to detail to ensure your time here is second to none.



Welcome

With spring in the air we are bidding farewell to the dark days of winter and looking ahead to lighter evenings and the unmistakable signs of summer just around the corner. This issue of *Ashford For You* is also packed with upbeat news guaranteed to put a spring in your step – from a profile of the much-anticipated Coachworks to a feature on an innovative minibus scheme which is having such a positive impact on some of our most rural communities.

Tourism is a vitally important sector for Ashford and I hope you will be delighted to read of a fresh approach to promoting our diverse and exciting tourism market. We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful and welcoming corner of Kent.

My thanks to everyone who is engaging so positively with the magazine – from the 500 readers who responded to our two competitions in the last issue to those who regularly offer their views and content ideas for future editions. And good luck to everyone who enters our competitions to win Eurostar tickets and a spa break at the London Beach Hotel!

Tracey Kerly

Tracey Kerly
Chief executive, Ashford Borough Council

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Get in touch!

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

Email: media@ashford.gov.uk (subject line NEWS) or
Write to: Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL

Customer Services

Email: customer.care@ashford.gov.uk
Write to: Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL
Call: 01233 331111

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

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

New Eurostar trains arrive...



Anyone recently visiting Paris, Lille and Brussels via Ashford International Station may have noticed Eurostar have introduced their new e320 trains, providing travellers with a state of the art and more spacious and comfortable on board experience.

Carrying up to 900 people, the e320 provides a more sustainable choice, with 20% more capacity than Eurostar's original train, and a single journey emitting up to 90% less

greenhouse gas emissions than the equivalent flight.

And there is more good news. The full restored service of three daily trains each way between Ashford and Paris will commence from the summer timetable, which is due to start on 17 May 2020.

To celebrate the news *Ashford For You* readers can win two pairs of standard class return tickets. All you need to do is enter our competition on page 22.



... as J10A boosts economy

The completion of the much-anticipated J10A on the M20 promises to reduce congestion at the existing J10 and unlock new jobs and investment in Ashford. The £104m Highways England project has been delivered in just 23 months, which is ahead of schedule.

The new junction – the third to serve Ashford – provides better access to Ashford Retail Park, improved footways and cycleways and also new wildlife habitats.

Ashford Borough Council has long campaigned for the delivery of extra road transport capacity to cater for the town's future needs. J10A is another piece of the district's integrated transport infrastructure jigsaw to fall into place.

The completion of the long-awaited junction – and the addition of a network of surrounding feeder roads – promises to be a catalyst for further economic and commercial development in Ashford, creating job opportunities and improving the infrastructure of the fast-growing town. It means another of the so-called Big 8 projects has been successfully delivered.

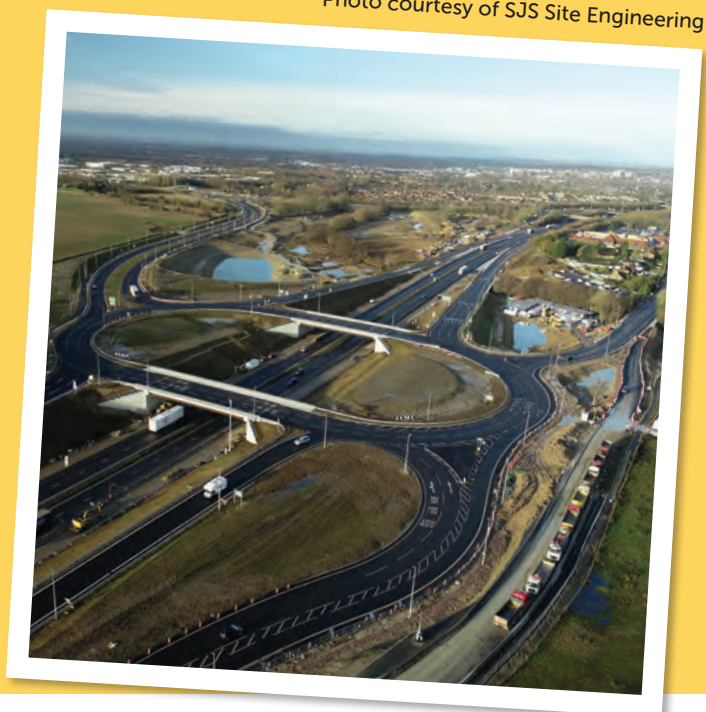


Photo courtesy of SJS Site Engineering

Freedom Leisure set to take over



Freedom Leisure is set to take over the day to day running of the borough's main leisure facilities this spring, including the Stour Centre (pictured), Julie Rose Stadium and other council owned leisure sites. Freedom Leisure is a not-for-profit leisure trust which manages facilities on behalf of partners across the UK, including two centres in Kent, in Maidstone and Sandwich.

They will take over the reins from Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT) in the spring and will be working in partnership with the council to oversee significant investment in leisure facilities and a transformation in the way they are provided, boosting participation and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

Sensory Garden

A disused courtyard at the William Harvey Hospital is being transformed into a wonderful sensory garden thanks to the fundraising efforts of the community. The first phase has been completed, with the overgrown space cleared and planted beds and seating installed, fragrant herbs and flowers planted and an access door to the space widened and a ramp installed allowing patients to enjoy the garden. Money has come from donations via the Garden of Light at the Ashford Designer Outlet, Tesco, Brake Brothers, Aviva plus fundraising by hospital staff and the public.

Local lottery launch

If you'd like the chance to win £25,000 while supporting local charities and good causes, our exciting new community lottery is for you.

Tickets will only cost £1, and players can nominate a local good cause to support with their ticket purchase. 60p from the sale of each ticket will go to good causes within Ashford borough. More information on how to get involved, as a good cause or player, will be available on our social media channels and website soon.

Create 25 is coming!

This year will be Create Festival's 25th anniversary! Make sure you've got the date in your diary for one of the south east's biggest and best free festivals – Saturday 18 July from 11am to 9pm, Victoria Park. More information will be available on the Create Festival website www.createfestival.co.uk



Free trees

As part of Ashford Borough Council's pledge to become carbon neutral by 2030, it is keen to encourage the planting of tree saplings as part of a wider carbon reduction programme.

In addition to planting trees on the borough council's own land, it is hoped that parish councils will join in so as an incentive to participate we plan to offer ten free tree saplings to each parish. Each will be asked to provide simple data on the tree stock held within land owned by each parish council.

In return for the data, our Aspire Landscape Management service will offer guidance on planting the supplied trees and future maintenance requirements. The trees will be sustainably sourced.

Everyone deserves respect

There has been a rise in verbal and sometimes physical abuse experienced by council staff. This is happening at the Civic Centre, when our employees are out and about and even when they are not working. This is unacceptable and we urge people to treat our staff with respect.

If you decide to express your views on our social media pages we agree everyone is entitled to their opinions but abusive comments may be deleted and the individual blocked. We understand that sometimes things can be frustrating, and at times we get things wrong. While we are here to assist we also believe everyone, staff and residents included, should be treated with respect.

Competition winners

Nearly 500 readers took part in our two competitions to win Macknade hampers and free classes at Liberty Wellbeing in Ashford. The two lucky winners of the hampers are Barry Buckton and Sara Massey. Looking forward to sampling free classes are Nicolette Bassan, Claire Wallington, Gillian Dade, Lena Blake, Bernice Barber, Lynette Chinnery, Ann Town, Catharine Warman, Julie Beavers, Daina Sullivan and Charlotte Housden. Congratulations to each winner and thanks to everyone who took part. See page 22 for our latest fantastic competitions.

MACKNADE
FOOD, FAMILY AND FRIENDS SINCE 1647





Readers' Survey 2020

We're always looking for ways to improve *Ashford For You* magazine therefore we'd love to hear your thoughts. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and you could win a £50 Love2Shop voucher. Alternatively complete the survey online at www.ashford.gov.uk/ashford-for-you

Tenterden's yesteryear on show



Stallholders at the Tenterden church fete on 11 and 12 July, 1911 clearly weren't dressed properly unless they wore an enormous hat!

An exhibition of Tenterden's civic regalia, archives, historical artefacts and photographs held at the Town Hall in September was such a resounding success that it's being repeated in May.

More than 700 people visited the exhibition, but many visitors to the town or residents either missed it or expressed the wish it could have been held for longer. The exhibition will be open to pupils from Tenterden Schools Trust on Friday, 1 May, and to the public on Saturday and Sunday, 2 and 3 May.

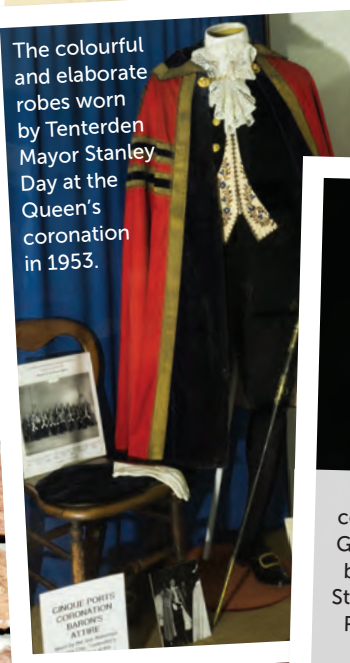
It features copies of the priceless Polychronicon, printed by William Caxton in 1480, ceremonial robes and chains of office worn by Mayors of Tenterden dating back 100 years, and 150 photographs of the town. The exhibition is supported by displays at Tenterden Museum.

The exhibition is open from 10am-4pm on Saturday and Sunday, admission by raffle ticket £1 for adults, free for children. The Museum is open 11am-4.30pm on the same days, admission £2 for adults, free for children.

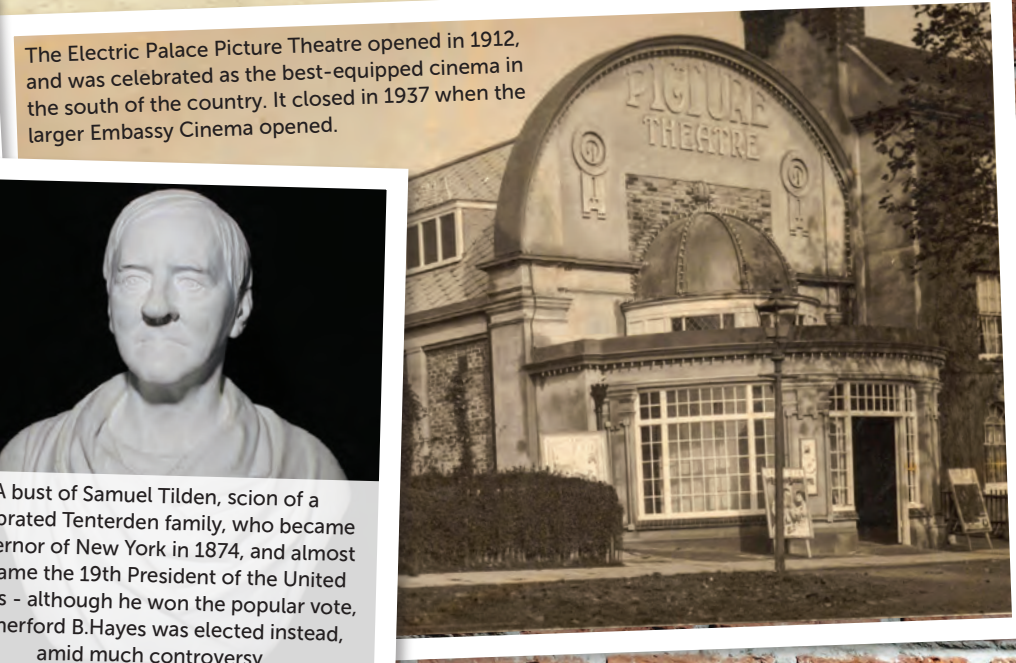
Photos courtesy of Tenterden & District Museum, Jack Gillett, Tenterden Town Council, Kent & East Sussex Railway, Henry Edwards and Cllr Sue Ferguson



A Daimler and two Leyland 'charabancs' leave the town en route to the coast with local workers. A special treat, and for many their only day off in the year. Picture taken in the 1920s.



The colourful and elaborate robes worn by Tenterden Mayor Stanley Day at the Queen's coronation in 1953.



The Electric Palace Picture Theatre opened in 1912, and was celebrated as the best-equipped cinema in the south of the country. It closed in 1937 when the larger Embassy Cinema opened.



A bust of Samuel Tilden, scion of a celebrated Tenterden family, who became Governor of New York in 1874, and almost became the 19th President of the United States - although he won the popular vote, Rutherford B. Hayes was elected instead, amid much controversy.

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree *Ashford For You* keeps you up to date with what the council is doing?

Strongly agree Neither agree/disagree Strongly disagree
 Agree to some extent Disagree to some extent Don't know

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree *Ashford For You* keeps you informed with what's going on in the borough?

Strongly agree Neither agree/disagree Strongly disagree
 Agree to some extent Disagree to some extent Don't know

Q3. How do you rate *Ashford For You* magazine overall?

Very good Good Average Poor Very poor

Q4. What do you like most about *Ashford For You* magazine?

Q5. What articles would you like to see in future editions?

Q6. Do you have any other comments to make about how to improve *Ashford For You*?

Q7. About you

Gender
 Male Other
 Female Prefer not to say

Age
 Under 18 35-44 65+
 18-25 45-54 Prefer not to say
 26-34 55-64

Please provide your postcode:

To enter either: Email the completed survey to: competitions@ashford.gov.uk or send to: *Ashford For You* magazine, Communications, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL.

The closing date for entry is 5pm on Thursday 9 April. Only one entry allowed per person and applicants must be over 16. The draw will take place on Friday 10 April and the winner of the voucher will be notified soon after. For full terms and conditions see page 22 or visit www.ashford.gov.uk/ashford-for-you

Data protection
 Ashford Borough Council is the data controller for the personal information you provide us. Collecting and processing of your personal data is being conducted relying upon the legal basis of consent. We will not share your information with any third parties unless we are required or permitted to do so by law. For more information about your data protection rights see our data protection pages at www.ashford.gov.uk or contact the Data Protection Officer, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1PL.



COACHWORKS

Dover Place

Ashford

TN23 1HU

Main entrance through yard gates



Coachworks adds the 'cool factor'

Coachworks, an exciting urban design scheme in the heart of Ashford, is making its mark as one of the coolest places to work and hang out.

The third and final phase of Coachworks opened in time to host the glittering Illuminities projection show onto the exterior of the neighbouring International House in December, when an estimated 1,000 visitors attended its opening weekend.

The cluster of former agricultural industrial buildings are owned by Ashford Borough Council and have been transformed by award-winning architect Carl Turner, who is responsible for some of the most innovative and ground-breaking projects in London. Carl has been engaged by the council to design, deliver and manage the scheme.

When Carl Turner and his team were chosen by the council to mastermind the scheme, they were praised for delivering a stunning response to the brief to find an imaginative new use for industrial buildings that date back

to 1846, and were originally used by a corn merchants. The authority was impressed that Turner had drawn on Ashford's rich history as a centre of trade to provide a platform for the next generation of creative innovators.

The inspiration for the Coachworks name comes from a firm of coachbuilders who were based there for 30 years from the 1960s; Crofords Carriages counted the Royal household and Harrods among its customers and the company still operates from Ashford today.

Carl Turner said: "There is nothing else like this in Ashford and across the region and I'm confident that Coachworks is going to prove hugely popular and draw people into the town from far and wide. Early feedback has been very encouraging and I would urge people to watch this space for a regular line up of exciting events during 2020."

The ambitious project is breathing new life into disused buildings in Dover Place, close to the international railway station. Coachworks is made up of three distinct spaces:

The Platform – the three-storey former Corn Store is now a business incubator with start-up work spaces and shared facilities. The cool surroundings are proving a big draw for creative and media specialists – one of Kent's largest independently-owned publishing firms was one of the first tenants to move into the Platform.

The Hot House – the former Ashford Youth Theatre building, empty since 2016 and known to Ashfordians for its distinctive external artworks – has been transformed into a home for food and drinks outlets, with event space added. An eye-catching mezzanine level bar provides seating overlooking the indoor events area.

A feature is that the walls of the building have been re-clad in a profiled polycarbonate sheeting, which helps transform the building into a lantern at night.

The Event Yard and Yard Bar – a large open-air space which is ideal for events such as theatre, cinema and live sports screenings.

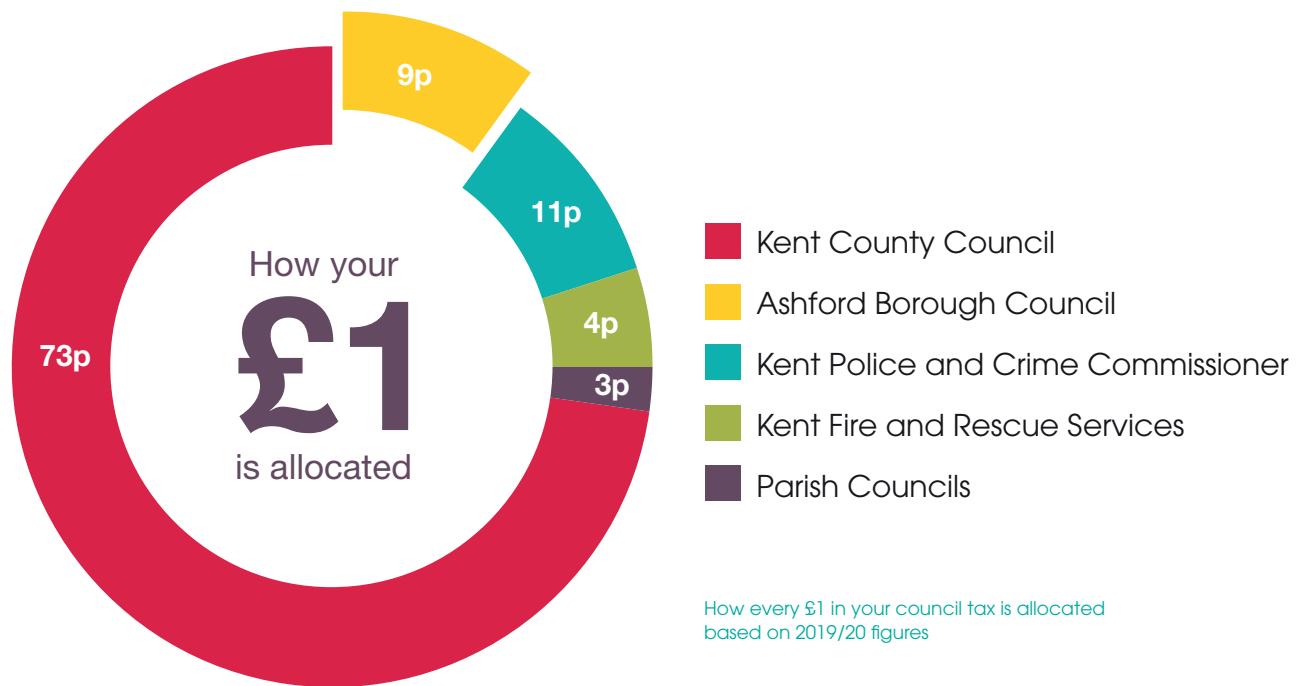
Putting Ashford on the map...

Within weeks of the final phase of Coachworks being completed, influential national magazine *Architect's Journal* carried a report detailing how Turner has worked in partnership with Ashford Borough Council to transform unused light-industrial buildings into an exciting co-working and event space. *AJ* praised the "light-touch renovation" for creating "a bright new environment" in Ashford.

Artist in residence
Liz Wilson – heralded as a cultural ambassador for the Coachworks – has taken up her role and is already boosting creative engagement with tenants and visitors to the site, organising workshops and looking to reach out to the wider community in Ashford town centre.



For more information about renting space at Coachworks, opening hours, upcoming events and more, visit www.coach-works.co.uk [Facebook @CoachworksAshford](https://www.facebook.com/CoachworksAshford) [Twitter @coachworks_ash](https://twitter.com/coachworks_ash) [Instagram coachworks-ash](https://www.instagram.com/coachworks-ash)



Balancing the books

As *Ashford For You* went to print, the council was finalising the details of the 2020/21 budget, including council tax, for the coming year. The information in this article was correct at the time of writing but may be subject to change.

As funding from government has reduced, Ashford Borough Council has adopted an entrepreneurial approach. This has led to economic redevelopment in the town centre and new commercial acquisitions. Additional revenue generated through commercial activity provides rental income to the council, which is helping us deliver cost-effective services that residents expect.

An important element of our funding is the New Homes Bonus paid to councils for each new residential property built. It is forecast that Ashford will receive £2.9m in 2020/21. A proportion of this income is allocated to day-to-day expenditure and a proportion for projects.

Government is consulting on whether to reduce and remove this funding stream. If this does happen then significant pressures would need to be managed in future years.

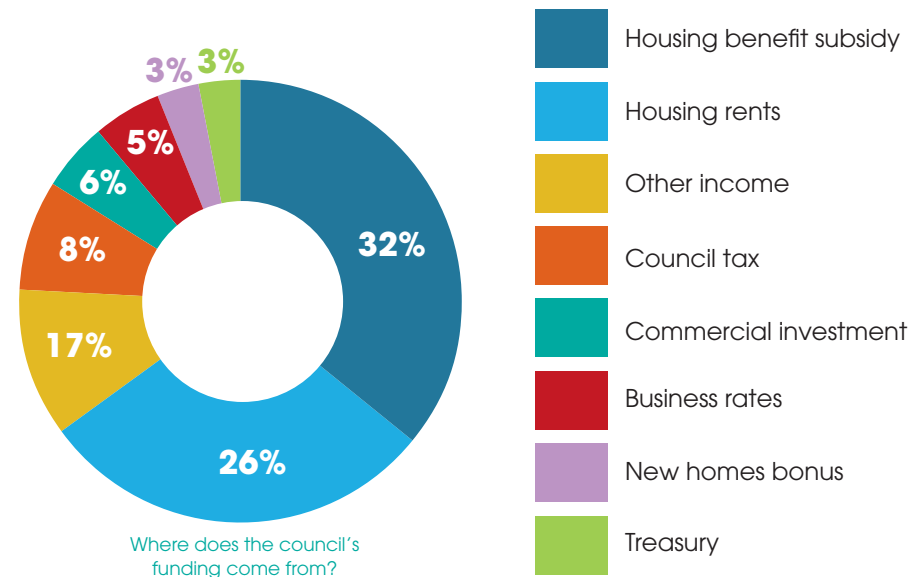
Ashford has the lowest council tax in Kent and to continue to deliver service expectations it is proposed to raise council tax by £5 for 2020/21.

Each £1 of your council tax is split between several organisations, with Ashford Borough Council receiving 9p.

The council tax reduction scheme, which supports residents on lower incomes, has been consulted upon and will be changed from 2020/21.

Council tax bills will be sent to residents during March. If you have any queries and need to contact us, please make sure you have your reference number to hand.

Signing up to receive your bills by email is easy and saves us paper and money – each bill we send out costs us 50p. You can register online at www.ashford.gov.uk/council-tax and select Council tax e-billing.



New ways to pay



As part of the council's ongoing programme of investment in our car parks we are introducing automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology to the borough. So what is it and how do you use it?

ANPR provides a simple and flexible approach to paying for parking. ANPR technology uses cameras to record the registration number of vehicles as they arrive and exit the car park.

Upon entry to a car park, your vehicle number plate is scanned. On returning to the car park, enter your registration number on the touch-screen machines and then pay the relevant price of your stay. If you have an online account, it's even easier, as your account can be automatically debited for the time you have stayed.

offer for our customers, it allows the council to better understand parking usage and patterns so that we can better tailor our offers to match our customers' needs.

Residents and regular visitors will be encouraged to sign up for an account with the council and provide vehicle and payments details, which will then allow the automatic payments to be made.

Signing up will be easy, fast and secure. You will be able to pay for your parking using cash, credit card and by phone.

To start with we are introducing this system at Elwick Place car park (next to the Picturehouse cinema), in the spring with plans to roll it out all suitable car parks across the borough in the future.

Only ever pay for what you use

This new technology allows you to leave vehicles for as long as you wish and you only ever pay for what you use. No longer will you have to worry about losing a parking ticket, or having to dash back to the car park as you've run out of time and might get a dreaded parking fine.

Not only does this provide a more flexible parking

P More information can be found on our website at www.ashford.gov.uk/parking

Paying for ANPR is as easy as 1, 2, 3



Enter car park and number plate is scanned



On return enter your reg number into machine



Pay (via machine or by an online account)



EXPERIENCE
Ashford & Tenterden
 See Find Taste Try



VE Day in the spotlight

This year marks the 75th anniversary of VE Day, which will be celebrated with a weekend of events from Thursday 7 to Sunday 10 May. Friday 8 May has been declared a bank holiday, moved from Monday 4 May, to mark the event.

Ashford will be hosting the Flame of Remembrance VE75 Lanterns Tour on Thursday 7 May, with a short service in Memorial Gardens at 11 am. Two Flame of Remembrance lanterns are being carried from Twickenham to Dover Castle and will be passing through the town on their journey.

On Friday 8 May the council is planning an afternoon concert in Memorial Gardens and live music at the bandstand to help residents get into the spirit of the day, ready to join the Nation's Toast to the heroes of WW2 at 3pm.

A small 'Ashford in the Second World War' photographic exhibition is also being planned for the Memorial Gardens. We would like to hear from you if you have photos that could be featured, especially ones of VE Day celebrations in 1945.

Residents are being encouraged to hold street parties on Saturday 9 May and event information will be available on the council website and social media in the coming weeks. On Sunday 10 May there will be church services across the country.

For more information – contact David Robinson david.robinson@ashford.gov.uk, Tel: 01233 330291 or visit www.veday75.org

LoveAshford's Easter Trail
 Embark on an Easter Trail around the High Street, Park Mall and County Square in Ashford and find the hidden letters from select stores to help you crack the hidden code and claim a **FREE** chocolate Easter egg!
 11 April, 11am-2pm, Ashford town centre.
 More details at:
www.loveashford.com



Charing Tudor Festival

Celebrating King Henry VIII's stay in Charing 500 years ago en-route to the Field of Cloth of Gold for his famous meeting with King Francis I of France, Charing Village presents a Tudor Festival. Commencing the evening of Friday 26 June it continues on Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 June 2020.

Evening performance of Tudor songs by The Grove Singers with readings by Charing & District History Society
Friday 26 June at Charing Parish Church

Charing Village Fete Tudor Style!
 Plus, official opening by 'His Majesty'
Saturday 27 June

King Henry VIII and his Court
 Tudor apothecary, bowmen, falconry, chainmail makers, musicians and dancers, pedlar, jester, market stalls and more
Sunday 28 June

Save the date and come and get a flavour of Tudor life as it was lived in Charing. Further details at www.charingkent.org

EXPERIENCE **2020**
Ashford & Tenterden
 See Find Taste Try

www.experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk

Get your **FREE** copy and let us know what's inspired you.



Making memories in Ashford and Tenterden

With the weather improving, now is the perfect time to get out and about and experience the wealth of different things Ashford offers as a borough.

- Research shows that people increasingly want their trips out to be about Experiences and making memories – to See, Find, Taste and Try something unique. In response to this, Ashford Borough Council is now focussing on these four elements with a tourism rebrand, new Experiences brochure and inspirational video which can currently be seen at the Designer Outlet and the Ashford Gateway.
- Whether you live in the borough or are just visiting, there are lots of exciting things to experience this spring. Here are just a few suggestions of things to see and do on your doorstep...
- Try riding the footplate or being a driver for the day on the Kent & East Sussex Railway.
 - Why not meet the winemakers for a personal tour and tasting at Biddenden Vineyards.
 - Practise your skills as a photographer and get up close to lions, tigers, jaguars and more at the Big Cat Sanctuary.
 - Check out the bluebell barometer and see the magnificent displays at Hole Park.
- Tourism in the borough is worth an estimated £293m a year and employs around 4,270 people. This rebrand aims to give people even more reasons to visit, stay and experience the area.
- You can find more inspiration at www.experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk

What's On this Spring

March

Turin Brakes Acoustic and Kevin Pearce

One of the finest indie bands of the last two decades. See them in their first full stripped back acoustic tour since 2002. They will be playing a range of songs spanning their 20 year career, including seven top 40 singles and six top 40 albums. **12 March, doors 7pm, show 7.30pm, Revelation Ashford, St Mary's Church, The Churchyard TN23 1QG. Adult £20**

Roald Dahl and The Imagination Seekers

All around the world Roald Dahl's words are disappearing, not only from books but children's minds too. Now only an organisation known as the Ancient Guild of Tale Tenders can save the stories – and they need your help. Roald Dahl and the Imagination Seekers is a theatrical and interactive experience, for all the family to enjoy. **14 March, doors 1.45pm, show 2.30pm, Revelation Ashford, St Mary's Church, The Churchyard TN23 1QG. Early Bird: £7 (door £8), Family: £26 (door £30)**

Workshop – Gardening Through The Year

Join Fiona Abrahams as she guides you through the gardening year. Stay up to date with seasonal tasks, techniques to get the best results and practical activities. Draw inspiration from the beautiful gardens at Godinton as you watch the changes that each season brings, increase plant knowledge, gain confidence and learn practical skills. **18 March, 9.30am-1.30pm, Godinton House & Gardens, Godinton Lane, Ashford TN23 3BP. Booking essential, £40**

Concert by The Kings Men, Cambridge

The Kings Men is the close-harmony group formed from the choral scholars of King's College, Cambridge. The choir is most famous for the broadcast of A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on radio each Christmas, and its companion programme, Carols from King's, on BBC television. **20 March, show 7.30pm, St Margaret's Church, Bethersden. Tickets £15 from Bethersden Post Office**

A ticket to ride

Ashford's Railway Trilogy

April

Revelation Present: Dad's Army Radio Show

Two actors, two microphones, over 25 characters and lots of sound effects! The nation's favourite sitcom brought gloriously to life returns in this highly-acclaimed production. Three episodes of the hugely popular radio series hilariously and lovingly enacted by two master performers. **3 April, doors 7pm, show 7.45pm, Revelation Ashford, St Mary's Church, The Churchyard TN23 1QG. Early Bird: £18 (door £22), Under 16 £15 (door £18)**

Family Film Fun: Paddington

Join LoveAshford as they bring the best in family-favourite films to Revelation. A young Peruvian bear with a passion for all things British travels to London in search of a home. Finding himself lost and alone at Paddington Station, he begins to realise that city life is not all he had imagined. It looks as though his luck has changed until this rarest of bears catches the eye of a museum taxidermist. **4 April, doors 2.30pm, show 3pm, Revelation Ashford, St Mary's Church, The Churchyard TN23 1QG. Tickets 50p (only available on the door)**

Spring Week at Godinton House & Gardens

There's lots going on for the whole family during Spring Week at Godinton House & Gardens, with activities for all the family to enjoy. Follow the garden trail, play traditional games and have fun with children's crafts. **6-10 April, Godinton House & Gardens, Godinton Lane, Ashford TN23 3BP. Booking essential, Adult £7, Child £5**

Cadbury Easter Egg Hunt

Get ready for a weekend of fun and discovery as you spot the first signs of spring at the amazing places the National Trust looks after. **10-13 April, 11am-3pm, Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, TN30 7NG. Admission: £3**

A Ticket to Ride – Ashford's Railway Trilogy

The world premier of a new play celebrating Ashford & the Railways, with live music, film and a choir of 200. Starting at Ashford Revelation, where it is 1841 and the first train is about to arrive. In the second half we move to Ashford in different time-zones, as the audience walk to two other town venues (one outside) as part of the show, so please dress appropriately! **24 April, 30 April and 1 May at 7.30pm, 25 April and 2 May at 2.30pm & 7.30pm, Revelation Ashford, St Mary's Church, The Churchyard TN23 1QG. Adult £8, U16/ Concessions £4, Family (2 adult, 2 U16) £20**



May

Singing with Nightingales

A magical weekend at Green Farm, where you'll have the chance to 'find your voice' through a series of small group singing workshops, to relax in the spa, to reconnect with the natural world, and to experience the beautiful song of the nightingales through a special guided night-time walk. **1-3 May, Green Farm, Duck Lane, Shadoxhurst TN26 1LT. Cost £495 (includes 2 nights stay, all meals & use of spa) www.greenfarmkent.co.uk**

Gardens and Landscapes in the novels of Jane Austen

A study day run by Sally Ann Wardroper, combining literature with garden history. Look at the contemporary trends and fashions in garden design and landscape tourism in Jane Austen's time, and consider the ways in which she uses these in her work to develop and enrich her characters and plots. **14 May, 10am-3pm, Godinton House & Gardens, Godinton Lane, Ashford TN23 3BP. Booking essential: £40 (including tea/coffee and home-made cake)**

Bluebell Spectacular

Hole Park gardens are well known for having a spectacular display of bluebells in April and early May. The gardens will be celebrating one of the UK's favourite native flowers with a 'Bluebell Festival'. Visitors can enjoy the amazing display of bluebells while taking the circular woodland walk. Hole Park's website www.holepark.com will have a Bluebell Barometer which will be updated regularly in April. Normal admission fees. **13 April-8 May, 11am-6pm, Benenden Road, Rolvenden, Cranbrook TN17 4JA. Adults £8, Children £1 (5 - 16 years)**

More information

Get more information on these events and see what else is on here:

For events around the borough:
www.experienceashfordandtenterden.co.uk

For events at Revelation St Mary's:
www.revelationashford.co.uk tickets can also be purchased from the **Tourist Information Centre** at Ashford Gateway Plus

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Hardy's fictional masterpiece, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, traces the life of the young country girl Tess Durbeyfield. Hardy's heroine is one of the most moving in all of literature, and her story is hauntingly brought to life in this new version by Hotbuckle. **16 & 17 May, 7.30pm, Smallhythe Place, Smallhythe, Tenterden, TN30 7NG. Admission: £15.50**

Make Mindful Mandalas

Join Aimee from Gracefully Boho and enjoy the relaxing art of creating beautiful mandalas. Start by learning the basics of creating mandalas using the simple technique of joining circles. Then progress onto designing your pattern work on top of book pages and maps to create a unique piece of art you can frame for your home. **Classes held the fourth Wednesday of every month starting 27 May, 10am-3pm, Made in Ashford, Park Mall, Ashford. Admission £2**

FUTURE DANCE

ASHFORD'S No1 CHOICE FOR THEMED BIRTHDAY PARTIES

"We chose the Karaoke and Dance party and several girls said it was the best party they'd ever been to"

"My daughter and her friends really enjoyed the Cheerleading party. For me it was a stress-free experience – which is always a plus"

PLUS dance and fitness classes, 80s band for hire, monthly kids disco and much more.

Visit: www.futuredance.info today



Social enterprise booming

Ashford borough has been granted Social Enterprise Place status, reflecting the fact it is a hub of social enterprise. Ashford is the first area in Kent to be given this status.

The aim of the award is to promote and raise awareness of social enterprises and to help them at a local and national level. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership recognises the value of these to the region's economy where they contribute £2.3bn and employ between 44,000 and 62,000 people.

The council is committed to working with social enterprises to support them to thrive. Aspire, our grounds maintenance company, will be working with Wood n Ware to create rustic benches, sculptures and interpretation elements as part of improvements to the Queen Mother's Park.

Rebecca Smith, deputy CEO of Social Enterprise Kent (SEK) CIC, said: "This sector in Ashford is thriving – and SEK is so proud to be part of it. With our oldest Ashford social enterprise dating back to the 1920s (Rural Kent), and brand new ones starting each month, we are excited to see the growth of the sector in the borough.

"Rural Kent, along with SEK, Craftship Enterprise (Made in Ashford) and the Beehive were integral in submitting the application to Social Enterprise UK, and we are so pleased to be recognised as a hub of activity.

"We are in challenging times, and social enterprises are uniquely placed to make a real difference in our communities due to the combination of entrepreneurial skills with social and environmental causes."

Melissa Dawkins, director of Craftship Enterprise CIC & manager of Made in Ashford, said: "We are thrilled to be given Place status to recognise Ashford as an important area for social enterprise growth. More social enterprises starting, such as Create You and WarriorKind Women, shows how fast this sector is building.

"They work closely, collaborating, offering support and skill sharing together. Having Place status will help provide better provision and ensure our success, giving back to the community and help to create a better Ashford."

Social enterprise events



March

Tuesday 3, 10, 17 & 24 Crochet for Beginners £45, 4 day course over 4 weeks 10.30-1.30

Saturday 7 Paper Crafted Photo Frame Canvas for Mother's Day 2-3 pm £8

Sunday 15 Felted Soap Workshop 11-1 £15

Friday 20 & 26 Learn to make a Memory Cushion 10-12.30 £25

Sunday 29 Sew a footstool cover (footstool included) 10.30-1.30 £45

Monday 30 Fairy Garden Workshop 2.30-4.30 £15

April

Monday 6 3D Bunny Mask workshop 1-2 pm £3.50

Monday 6 Fabric Wreath 2.45-4.15 £7

Tuesday 7 Family Holiday Memory Box workshop 2.30-4.30 £15

Wednesday 8 Easter Collage and Paper Mosaic Workshop 10.30-12 £5

Saturday 16 Make your own Summer Bunting (2 mtr) drop in session 10.30-2.30 £12

July

Friday 3, 10 & 17 Shaped Cushion Workshop 10.30-12.30 £40

All events at Made in Ashford, Park Mall



Royal opening

Residents of our newest sheltered housing scheme were thrilled to meet Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal when she visited Danemore in Tenterden to officially open the centre. Ashford Borough Council has invested £7.5m in redeveloping Danemore, which is a short walk from the town centre.

During her hour-long tour of the award-nominated scheme, The Princess Royal was welcomed into the home of resident Mrs Barbara Williams who chatted to her Royal guest about her happy experiences of living at Danemore.

Barbara said: "She was lovely. When I heard that The Princess Royal was coming to visit I was thrilled and hoped I would get to see her.

"When she called into my home you can imagine how delighted I was to meet her. We had a lovely chat and a laugh."

Before unveiling a commemorative plaque, The Princess Royal met and chatted with residents of the scheme in the large communal lounge, much to the delight of the people who are now proud to call Danemore home. She also met council staff, councillors and developers behind the project.

The reopening is a landmark in our multi-million pound modernisation plan for our sheltered housing schemes. Danemore provides 34 homes for affordable rent for older people, together with four chalet bungalows which are being sold on the open market to subsidise some of the project's costs. Modelled on the award-winning Farrow Court scheme in Ashford, Danemore has 25 one-bedroom and nine two-bedroom apartments.

Dementia-friendly design

Danemore is designed to be dementia-friendly, taking into account colour schemes, light, corridor lengths, patterns and memory shelves. It has been devised in recognition of the need to make provision for an ageing population – by 2026 it is anticipated that around 40% of Ashford residents will be aged over 50. There is a communal lounge and kitchen, laundry room, guest suite, buggy store and cycle racks. A treatment room provides hair dressing, nail bar and podiatrist and chiropodist massage chair plus foot spa. A real community spirit is fostered by the inclusion of shared facilities, including 'hubs' or sub lounges in addition to the communal lounge.





On the road to success

The rural minibus schemes in Rolvenden and Woodchurch have proven to be a huge success. So how are they getting on and which community could be next to get their very own minibus...

Community groups in Woodchurch and Rolvenden have praised the Community Connect scheme, after the successful rollout of the Woodchurch Wagon and the lift off for the Rolvenden Rocket. The 16-seater minibuses have transformed the communities, allowing groups to utilise the vehicle and make travelling to destinations in rural areas a lot easier.

Whether it's a social outing, attending an event or even a shopping trip, these minibuses are seen as an ideal way to minimise social isolation and both schemes are part of the council's initiative to improve wellbeing across the borough.

How does it work?

While provided by Ashford Borough Council, the minibuses are operated by parish councils. They run the booking system, collect the hire charges and undertake all administration. Volunteers drive the minibus and all monies collected go towards the operational costs, with any surplus being retained by the participating clubs.

Since launching in 2018, the Rolvenden Rocket has completed more than 8,000 miles, providing trips for many local groups. Recently these included taking passengers to a Christmas event in Tenterden and hosting a 'mystery trip' adding to the fun experience of travelling in a large group together.

Cllr Denise Curtain, chairperson of Rolvenden Parish Council, said: "We are delighted with the way the Rolvenden Rocket scheme has grown. Our dedicated volunteers are providing a high quality service for groups of all ages, covering a range of transport needs, not just for Rolvenden but also to the neighbouring communities. Not only have existing village organisations made good use of the opportunities that the bus offers but new social groups have also been created in the community, enabled by the availability of transport."

The Woodchurch Wagon launched in August 2019, with its first trip devoted to transporting the local football club. Since then, the minibus has been used by societies and charities, with volunteers once again playing a huge part in making it a success. The Wagon has been on trips across Kent and beyond, amassing nearly 2,000 miles. These include visits to Brighton, Faversham, Bluewater, Tunbridge Wells and Gatwick.

Cllr Nick Jones, vice chairman of Woodchurch Parish Council, said: "We've been delighted at the interest we have had. It's been booked for a range of activities including Shirkoak resident trips out, Woodchurch in Bloom trip to Brighton, private bookings for evenings out, a shuttlebus service for a local christening and a patient participation group outing to Ashford."

"As I don't drive I have been delighted to join several of the organised days out on the Rocket. It has widened my social circle and helped alleviate the isolation that being an elderly non-driver in a rural area can create."

Mrs P - Rolvenden Layne

The Community Connect scheme is open to community, voluntary, charitable or non-profit making organisations in Ashford. If you are interested, contact your local parish council to start the process.

"We are now looking to organise other days out to places of interest e.g. Hever Castle, for residents to book onto as well as potential theatre group evening trips among others. We have been very encouraged by the amount of volunteer drivers and we currently have 16 who have been through the 'Blue Lamp' training.

"We'd like to thank Ashford Borough Council for its continued support. Good progress definitely made however we still have work to do to ensure it proves an ultimate success and we are actively promoting 'use it or lose it' among our villagers."

Wye Parish Council is keen to become the next area to join the scheme and it is currently testing public demand.

Final word to Sheila Davison, Ashford Borough Council's head of community safety & wellbeing. "We are delighted the buses are working so well in bringing people and community groups together. We have received fantastic feedback on how they are helping people to get out and about, to make new friends and visit all sorts of places. The schemes are going from strength to strength and we are delighted to now be helping Wye Parish Council trial the scheme in support of their own community groups."

Funding has been allocated to provide four more minibuses, so this successful initiative looks set to expand into more communities across the area.

What Rolvenden and Woodchurch users have said:

"The Rolvenden Rocket has been a lifeline for our school providing transport for the children to try sports that they have never done before like snowboarding/skiing, sky diving and ice skating. Many of our children are from low income families and these trips allow our children to experience things that they can only dream of."

J Bray - Headteacher of Northiam CEP School

'The Woodchurch Wagon offers great transport option for the village.'

'The Wagon makes it affordable for us to go as a group when we don't have transport ourselves.'

'It's good to travel on a day out with friends using the Woodchurch Wagon rather than being in separate cars - much more sociable!'

'The Door to Door service when using the Woodchurch Wagon was great.'

To keep you bouncing this spring we are offering:

2 PEOPLE BOUNCE FOR THE PRICE OF 1!

Cut out the voucher below and bring along to Flip Out Ashford to get a **TWO FOR ONE OFFER** on a standard jump. One voucher per person. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers and valid at anytime during opening hours.

Offer ends Monday 8 June 2020.

Flip Out Ashford has a soft play area for under-twos and our party packages are perfect for birthdays. A slam dunk area, dodgeball arena and Ninja Assault Course add to the attractions and you can record all your flips and tricks with our FlyCam technology.

FLIP OUT ASHFORD

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Get ready for the Great British Spring Clean 2020!



The council is supporting the Great British Spring Clean again this year as we agree that litter pollution, including single-use plastic which degrades the beauty of our environment and threatens to harm wildlife, is not acceptable.

Clean-ups are taking place across the country from 20 March to 13 April 2020. So if you wish to host a clean-up, join a clean-up, or pledge to do your own thing, check out the website <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/>

Did you know?

You can borrow litter picking equipment from Ashford Borough Council, find out how here www.ashford.gov.uk/the-environment/streets/community-litter-pick/

Litter pickers (long-handle grabbers), high visibility vests in adult and child sizes, pairs of protective gloves in adult and child sizes, and bag hoops are available. Stocks are limited and equipment is offered on a first-come, first-served basis, so please submit your request at least ten working days before your event. Until then, start spreading the word as we prepare to stand together and declare that litter is not acceptable.

If you are planning on organising a clean-up, we would love to hear about your planned activities in the borough. Contact us via e-mail Street.Scene@ashford.gov.uk or use #keepkentclean and tag us in your litter pick pictures.

In 2019...



375

local litter heroes took part in clean-ups in the Ashford area.



315

bags of litter collected in Ashford.



563,163

people took part in the Great British Spring Clean all over the country.



957,377

bags of litter were collected from our country's schools, streets, parks, beaches and waterways. Equating to 4,308 tonnes of rubbish.

Ashford in Bloom Winners

As part of our Year of the Environment celebrations, Ashford Borough Council decided to re-launch the Ashford in Bloom gardening competition.

The judging panel were delighted by the high standard of all the gardens submitted. They were equally impressed by the wide range of projects that entered from across the borough. These included individual gardens as well as school projects and gardens coordinated by community groups.

It is with great delight that we can finally reveal the winners of the competition.

Winner of Best Front or Back Garden

Diane Brown

Winner of Most Environmentally Friendly Garden

Chris Hone

Winner of Best Use of a Small Space

Grant Padgham

Winner of Best Communal Garden

Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School

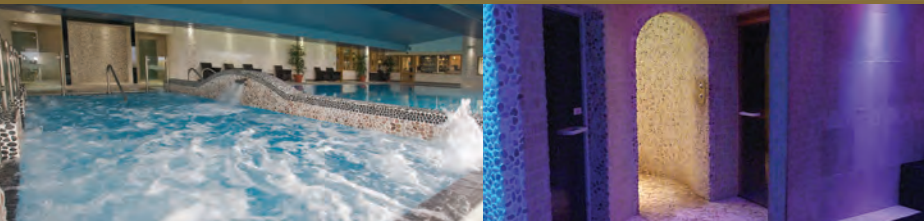


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- Beautiful parkland golf course
- Pitch & putt course, driving range, putting green and golf simulator



We have teamed up with the fabulous London Beach Hotel near Tenterden to offer an exclusive prize of an overnight stay for two people. The prize includes a night's break in one of 24 luxury bedrooms, all with private balconies overlooking the parkland golf course and stunning Wealden countryside. You will enjoy a three course dinner and breakfast PLUS one 25 minute spa treatment each – a relaxing Clarins Aromatic back, neck and shoulder massage.

The London Beach Hotel near Tenterden has a luxury adult-only spa with superb saline hydrotherapy and swimming pools, saunas and steam rooms. Its expert spa therapy team offer a range of treatments using Clarins and ESPA products.

The hotel has a superb restaurant serving mouth-watering starters, delicious main courses and sinful desserts, with produce sourced locally whenever possible.

For more information call 01580 766279 or visit www.londonbeach.com

WIN EUROSTAR TICKETS



Eurostar's new generation of e320 trains will provide a full service of three daily trains each way between Ashford International and Paris from 17 May – and to celebrate, readers can win two pairs of standard class return tickets.

Eurostar's new e320 trains provide travellers with a state of the art and more spacious and comfortable on board experience. With room for 900 passengers, the e320 provides a more sustainable choice, with 20% more capacity than Eurostar's original train.

The service of three daily trains each way between Ashford and Paris commences from the summer timetable on 17 May, and now's your chance to try out the new service for yourself. For more information visit www.eurostar.com

Two winners will be selected and each will receive two Eurostar standard class return tickets to Paris, Lille or Brussels from Ashford International. Travel to and from Eurostar stations is not included. Travel is subject to availability and the prize is valid until 31 December 2020.

To enter your name in our prize draws either:

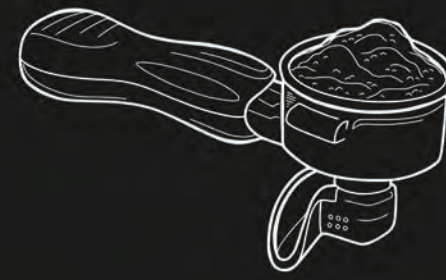
* Email the editorial team at competition@ashford.gov.uk – put either Eurostar or London Beach Hotel Competition Entry in the subject heading and include your full name, postal address and email. Please include a contact phone number.

* 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 Eurostar or London Beach Hotel Competition Entry on the card.

We will contact each winner to request consent to provide your contact details to Eurostar or London Beach Hotel to enable you to claim your prize.

Terms & conditions: 1. The competition is open to UK residents aged 18 years or older except employees of the Promoter, their families, agents or any third party associated with the competition. 2. The closing date of the competitions is **5pm on Thursday 9 April 2020**. 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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