

# ASHFORD

Issue 23 | Summer 2024

# FOR YOU

YOUR BOROUGH, YOUR MAGAZINE

## WHAT'S ON

Roundup of summer events

BIG YEAR AHEAD FOR TWIN TOWNS

CARING FOR YOUR WELLBEING

## WIN

- K&ESR steam railway family passes
- Tickets to Godinton House & Gardens



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## Welcome



Welcome to the latest edition of *Ashford For You*, an issue which has a strong focus on anniversaries. Read about celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of passenger services at the fabulous Kent & East Sussex Railway and two major landmarks featuring the Ashford Twinning

Association – 2024 is the 60th anniversary of twinning with Bad Münstereifel in Germany and the 40th anniversary of twinning with Fougères in France. The council itself reaches 50 this year, formed in 1974 as part of local government reorganisation.

Our What's On feature is packed with news of exciting events that offer something for everyone to enjoy, from July's Food Festival to a busy programme at Revelation, from Create Music Village to fairs and festivals across our district.

Getting the bins emptied and maintaining our proud reputation as a champion recycler is put under the spotlight as we examine the major changes introduced as part of a new waste contract which has been rolled out this year. Read all about it on pages 12 and 13.

Readers will probably know that the council has stepped in to save the former Picturehouse cinema from closure. Our action has prevented job losses and will help boost the entertainment offer in our town centre. We are working with industry experts to help make a success of The Ashford Cinema. Please support it by taking in a movie, pop in for a coffee or a bite to eat.

There is important news about further changes to the way you can vote at elections. We got our first taste of the need to show valid photo ID at last year's borough and parish elections in Ashford and our feature details more changes, together with details of new Parliamentary constituencies.

**Tracey Kerly**  
 Chief executive, Ashford Borough Council



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**Please note:** To contact us regarding a specific council service, visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/contact-us](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/contact-us) and select the relevant category relating to your query.

# K&ESR golden anniversary

The Kent & East Sussex Railway (K&ESR) is holding its 50th Anniversary Gala on 1 and 2 June 2024, the central event of its golden year of celebration. Three guest locos are expected at Tenterden to lead an augmented timetable of passenger services.

The Gala weekend will celebrate the achievements of the last 50 years and look forward to its next chapter, through work with the Rother Valley Railway, which is preparing to start the groundwork to reinstate the line between Robertsbridge and Bodiam.

Celebrations continue in following months with events such as K&ESR favourites like the CAMRA Real Ale & Cider festival, Fish and Chip trains and Halloween Fright Night – plus a few surprises yet to be announced. There is something for everyone, from guided bird watching tours to a Steam Punk Event bringing to life the world of Victorian science fiction, as depicted in the works of HG Wells and Jules Verne. For full details visit [www.kesr.org.uk](http://www.kesr.org.uk).



## Want to know about planning applications in your area?

Sign up to our planning subscription service and you'll get tailored emails straight to your inbox letting you know what's happening in your area. Choose to get notifications about valid applications, those under consultation, those being decided by committee and decisions on applications. You'll get a weekly email with information together with a link to the application on the public register for you to look at the plans in detail. Visit: [www.ashford.gov.uk/get-involved-in-planning](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/get-involved-in-planning).



## Teens discuss personal safety

Students at secondary schools around Ashford have been discussing personal safety with experts. Kent Police's Child Centred Policing Team and the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit worked with charities and guest speakers at a series of roadshows.

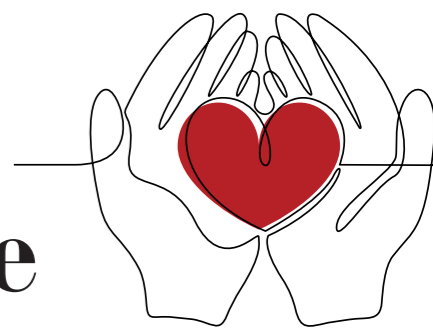
Discussions centred on substance abuse, prejudice and discrimination, positive relationships, online safety, knife crime and the dangers of getting drawn into gangs. Pupils were given advice on what activities are available for them locally. The events were hosted by Sam Griffin from Radio Ashford and Robbie White, star of Netflix series Heartstopper. Funding was provided by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner via Ashford Borough Council.

## Supporting our veterans

If you're a local Armed Forces veteran, you can receive free welfare and financial advice from council officers at the Royal British Legion office on Church Road, TN23 1RA. Drop in sessions take place on the second Friday of every month and you'll be welcomed with a hot drink and a friendly space to chat with other veterans.

It's part of our new Armed Forces Policy, which ensures that we support our reservist and regular forces communities and maintain our proud military history.

# Safeguarding advice



Safeguarding is the term used to protect children, young people and adults at risk from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and can take place in many forms. If you are concerned that you or someone you know is suffering abuse, contact:

- If it's in respect of the welfare of a child, call 03000 411111, or contact KCC Social Services Team online.
- If it's in respect of the welfare of an adult, call 03000 416161, or contact KCC Social Services Team online.

- For out of hours and in an emergency call 03000 419191.

Anonymous concerns can also be made to CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111 or via [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org).

If an adult or a child is in immediate danger, always call 999 for the emergency services.

More information and resources at the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board ([www.kmsab.org.uk](http://www.kmsab.org.uk)) or the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership ([www.kscmp.org.uk](http://www.kscmp.org.uk)).

## Goodbye Picturehouse, hello The Ashford Cinema

The council, alongside industry experts The Big Picture, have taken over the day-to-day operations of the former Picturehouse cinema, with the existing staff remaining.

Elwick Place will continue to give audiences in Ashford access to a great range of films and community events. The Ashford Cinema is offering a membership subscription for £17.99 a month called AAA. Members will be able to access any film, any day, any time. Visit [theashfordcinema.co.uk](http://theashfordcinema.co.uk) for more information.



## Ashford Port Health

Ashford Port Health is now playing a vital role in checking goods entering the UK from the European Union. Our team started document checks in January and physical checks on products from April.

The council is the Government-appointed enforcement authority for Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks at Sevington. These measures ensure that food entering the UK from the EU is safe to eat, and that animals and plants are free from pests and diseases. The Border Control Post at Sevington is situated within the Inland Border Facility, located alongside J10A of the M20.



## Competition winners

More than 500 entries were received for our competitions in the last issue. The winner of the wine tasting for four people at The Tudor Peacock in Chilham is Helen Medlock. The winner of the overnight stay for two people in a shepherd hut near Tenterden is Alexandra Hampson. See page 22 for our latest fantastic competitions.



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# Genuine charity or scammer?

Charity collection buckets allow charities to raise funds, however occasionally there are issues with dubious collectors who may falsely collect money. The regulation of fundraising involves agencies such as the Charities Commission, the Fundraising Regulator and Ashford Borough Council.

We control the collection of cash in a public place using a bucket, which requires a Street Collection Permit. This allows us to carry out basic checks on the authenticity of the collection and requires the submission of account records certified by an accountant.

When donating money we ask you to consider; do you know the charity concerned? are they a registered charity? are you happy that your money is going to the right cause? If in doubt, we suggest making your donation directly to your chosen charity.



## Club snaps up award

Members of Ashford Photographic Society triumphed in a county-wide competition and are going forward to represent Kent at a national level. The club meet Thursdays at the Elwick Club for competitions and guest speakers, in addition to outings and workshops to improve skills. Call 07773 601151, email [enquiries@ashfordps.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ashfordps.org.uk) or visit [www.ashfordps.org.uk](http://www.ashfordps.org.uk)



Great tit waiting for spoils by Richard Nutter

## Keep up with the news

Nearly 5,000 residents have signed up to receive our latest news, with more subscribing every month. If you want to be one of the first to find out what's going on, with news sent direct to your inbox please sign up today. [www.ashford.gov.uk/newsletter](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/newsletter).

## Eurostar campaign on track one year on

More than 53,000 people have signed a petition calling for the return of Eurostar services. They join hundreds of business leaders, representing thousands of employees, who responded to a survey calling for views on the lack of international rail services stopping in Kent. The campaign petition began in March 2023 and it continues to gather support. [www.ashford.gov.uk/eurostar](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/eurostar).

## Park inspires creative anthology

With funding from the Victoria Park Project, a group of six writers attended an eight-week creative writing course, led by tutor Sita Turner. They created tales and poems inspired by the park which they then self-published as an anthology.

Using archives to delve deeper into the park's history, work includes Nicki Herring's fantastic poem Little Things which looks at smaller aspects of nature, and Janine Gardiner's short story The Heart Remains the Same which fictionalises a conversation between trees as they reflect upon the changes they have seen over the years.

Stories from around the Fountain includes illustrations created with the help of Tom Green from local business Drum and Ink and copies are on sale in Made in Ashford, Park Mall. Priced at £5, 100% of the proceeds go to local charity The Oliver Steeper Foundation.



## Have you seen our new mural?

World renowned street artist Curtis Hylton returned to Ashford Town Centre in March to create a stunning new mural opposite his globally-acclaimed piece Flamboyant Fawn, which was voted into the top 20 pieces of street art in the world in 2023 via street art platform, Street Art Cities.

His second piece for Ashford, titled Proud Peacock, Bahar Flowers, showcases a majestic peacock, which symbolises the flourishing artistic community that emerged through last year's Ashford Unframed mural festival. The flowered

feathers of the peacock represent the beautiful flowers Curtis spotted in Salata, a café on Bank Street, whose owner Bahar kept the artist fuelled up on coffee during the week he was painting.

Curtis said of the piece: "I wanted the people of Ashford to have another piece of artwork that they are proud of, something colourful that they can enjoy."

To learn more about Ashford's murals, please visit [loveashford.com](http://loveashford.com)

Captions: left Fougères and right Bad Münstereifel (courtesy of Cllr Matthew Forest).



# Big year ahead for our twin towns.....



Ashford has forged strong links with mainland Europe through its twin towns, and this year sees our 60th anniversary of twinning with Bad Münstereifel and the 40th anniversary with Fougères.

Ashford's history with Bad Münstereifel started in the early 20th Century. However, twinning didn't take place until August 1964. The Fougères connection began with a liaison amicale in 1978, followed by an official ceremony in 1984.

## Wartime foes become friends

The history of this Anglo-German partnership goes back to the First World War. In 1919 Bad Münstereifel was occupied by British troops and one of them, Major J. Goode, formed bonds that endured and even survived the Second World War. The idea was to give young people from Germany and Britain a chance to get to know each other better in peacetime.

*The Ashford Twinning Association said: "It goes without saying that we look forward very much to this September. Much preparatory work is taking place to ensure that the September 2024 Civic Exchange in Ashford is an immense success for all three towns."*

## French connection

The beginnings of a partnership between Bad Münstereifel and Fougères began in 1964, when a number of towns in Brittany were seeking contact with Rhineland towns. All three towns are linked together as Bad Münstereifel and Fougères are also twinned with each other (from 1967).

## In times of trouble

The partnership between the three towns goes way beyond the official annual civic visits. They extend to youth and school visits, exchanges between local organisations, sports clubs and associations such as the Ashford Beekeepers.

The power of this friendship was demonstrated in July 2021 when storms caused flooding that destroyed a large part of Bad Münstereifel's beautiful and historic town centre. The Twinning Association and Ashford's Twinning Champion launched a Just Giving campaign raising an incredible £13, 844 through generous donations from Ashford residents.

## Ashford hosting special anniversary visit

'Then and Now – a Celebration of Twinning' is the theme when Ashford hosts a special civic visit from 19-23 September. Ashford Twinning Association would be delighted to hear from anyone who'd like to get involved, particularly people who may want to host guests from one of the twin towns.

## Our other twin towns

Ashford is also twinned with Hopewell, Virginia, USA. Tenterden is twinned with Avallon in the Burgundy region of France, while the village of Hamstreet is twinned with Théroutanne in France.

Further information can be found at [www.ashford.gov.uk/borough-arms-and-twinning](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/borough-arms-and-twinning) or by visiting the Ashford Twinning Association website - [www.ashfordtowntowns.uk/](http://www.ashfordtowntowns.uk/)



# Move to a new home progressing...

Office move to International House latest



As *Ashford For You* magazine went to print, plans for the council's move from our Civic Centre base in Tannery Lane to nearby International House were being finalised.

After initially putting forward the idea as part of budget savings proposals in the spring, a consultation took place during the summer with various stakeholders including residents, staff and tenants, and councillors approved the move late last year.

There is a strong financial rationale for moving to International House. We own both buildings and significant, expensive building and maintenance works are needed at the Civic Centre over the next few years.

A contractor has now been appointed to help us with the move, which will take place in phases during the rest of the year. We will keep residents up to date on progress, but for now, it is very much business as usual.

## Spring 2024

Tender, appoint contractor

## Summer 2024

Fit out works to International House

## Autumn 2024

Office move, (including customer contact centre)

## Winter 2024

Civic Suite move (including Council Chamber)

Further updates on our move will be provided on our website [www.ashford.gov.uk/office-move](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/office-move)

# What's On

With a wealth of events and activities, we've got plenty to keep you entertained this summer...

## Tenterden Family Fun Trail, a trail for all ages!

Follow me Hearties for the amazing FREE Family Fun Trail of Tenterden! Explore and discover Tenterden in fun-filled ways for all ages and abilities. So many activities to participate in and unravel – do it all or just a little, it's your trail! Pick up a copy in one of the many locations in Tenterden; shops, cafes, Tenterden Museum and the Kent & East Sussex Railway.



## Revelation

Nestled just off Ashford High Street is the revolutionary arts venue Revelation – atmospheric, intimate and quirky. Since 2011, the venue has welcomed international musicians, legendary performers and incredible experiences for the community.

With a range of performances including comedy from Rich Hall, tribute acts to Elvis, Pink Floyd and Led Zepellin and concerts from James Kirby and Aled Jones, visit their website to find out what's on [www.revelationashford.co.uk](http://www.revelationashford.co.uk)

## Community Arts Festival

Live music, food and drink, local dance, inflatables and lots of fun!

Saturday 8 June, 12-4pm, free entry, Homewood School, Tenterden.



## Sculpture Festival at Godinton House & Gardens

Between 20 July and 11 August sees the return of Godinton's annual exhibition of contemporary work, during which local artists are invited to display their work within the 12 acres of beautiful gardens. Visitors can enjoy a stroll amongst the eclectic mix of sculptures from traditional figurative art and abstracts in stone, through to bronze, glass, and steel.

Entry Tuesday – Sunday, tickets £8 for adults whilst under-16s go free.

## Pilgrims Hospices Summer Fair

Come along to the summer fair at Sandyacres Sports & Social Club in Sandyhurst Lane on **Sunday 28 July from 12 noon to 5pm**. There's fun for all the family – for full details visit [www.pilgrimshospices.org/get-involved/events-and-challenges](http://www.pilgrimshospices.org/get-involved/events-and-challenges) or call 01233 504111.

Dates for your diary – Tenterden Golf Day on 28 June; Christmas Fair 16 November. For details see online.

## The Spirit of Tenterden Festival

The fantastic Spirit of Tenterden returns to the Recreation Ground on 5 - 7 July 2024. There'll be live music, street food and local food producers, craft stalls, a real ale festival, children's entertainment, dog show and much more.

Opening times are Friday: 3pm-10pm, Saturday: 10am-10pm and Sunday: 11am-5pm.

## Biddenden Flower Festival

All are welcome and this year's theme, Dreaming of Gold and inspired by the Olympic Games, will feature brilliant floral displays created by villagers throughout All Saints, our 13th century church. Other highlights of the festival include musical interludes, a visit from the Morris Men and a chance to climb the church tower for magnificent views over the Weald. Our popular cake stand will be offering refreshments for sale, and a plant marquee will be selling seedlings. **From 25-27 of May, 10am-5pm.**

Admission is free but donations are welcome!



# Ashford to host inaugural Pride event

Ashford is set to celebrate diversity and inclusion with its first-ever Pride event on 22 June 2024. The event, organised by a passionate group of local community members, aims to provide a platform for LGBTQIA+ individuals and allies to come together in the spirit of unity and celebration.

Attendees can look forward to a day filled with live music, performances, community booths and educational resources promoting LGBTQIA+ rights and acceptance. The event will feature a colourful parade through the town centre, culminating in a celebration and after party at the Coachworks, Ashford. "We are thrilled to bring this long-awaited celebration of love and acceptance to Ashford" said Sam Griffin, one of the event organisers. "Our goal is to create a safe and welcoming space for everyone to come together, show their support and have a fantastic time."

The Pride Ashford event is open to all members of the community, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. It promises to be a day of joy, solidarity and empowerment for all who attend. For more information and updates on Pride Ashford follow on Facebook and Instagram @prideashford.

## Ashford Food & Drink Festival 2024

Taste and Try Throughout July with the return of the Ashford Food and Drink Festival 2024!

In its second year, the month-long event will serve a menu full of food and drink activities alongside offers in Ashford town centre.

The festival will launch the weekend of 29-30 June with ASHFOOD! a two-day celebration of local food and drink businesses at Elwick Place. Other activities include the return of Wine Garden of England with Boys Hall and Kent Vineyards at Revelation and Curious Brewery hosting a two-day beer festival.

So come and experience the tastes and flavours of our wonderful food and drink businesses this summer. [loveashford.com](http://loveashford.com)

## D Day commemorations

For emerging details of how the council is planning to mark the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings on 6 June 2024 please keep an eye on [www.ashford.gov.uk/dday80](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/dday80)

## Ashford Festival in the Park

23, 24, 25 August

Free music and arts festival at Civic Park, Ashford. This year they will also be showcasing their charity marketplace. For more details check out their facebook page @ashfordfestivalinthepark

## Create Music Village 2024

Create Music Village returns this autumn with a whole month of live music across Ashford throughout October. Acts will include UK icons, classic cover bands and some of Kent and beyond's most exciting new acts. With venues including Revelation, Low Key Taproom and Coachworks, the event aims to be accessible for all, with free tickets on offer for some shows. Create is a great opportunity to support local grassroots music venues and artists, as well as experiencing a wonderful diverse mix of live music without the big ticket price tag.



**Ashford's**  
**CARNIVAL OF THE BAUBLES**  
**Save the date**  
**SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2024**  
**ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE**

# Your new waste service

In March we started a new waste and recycling contract with SUEZ.

Although the contractor has changed, the majority of staff have stayed the same. Many of you have seen changes in your waste collection in terms of different collection days or varying times of the collection.

This has resulted from a review of collection services, which was required and would have happened no matter who the contractor for the new service would have been. Over time the borough has seen new development with many new homes being added to the closest waste collection round.

Consequently, this meant that over time we had developed uneven workloads for the staff crewing the collection rounds. In addition, the waste transfer station in Ashford was struggling to be able to deal with varying amounts of waste, and fleet collection times, on our rounds.

With this new contract we had the opportunity to maximise the flexibility of the fleet, provision of different vehicle widths (to ensure better access where historic issues were known), reduced environmental impact of our fleet by moving to electric bin lifts (reducing carbon

impact) and having better tracking information on our fleet to ensure even workloads for our crews.

The ability to give “live” information to customers on collection crew progress, to have cameras on all our vehicles for the safety of our crews and the ability for us to quickly remedy complaints about missed bins is already proving very helpful and will continue to do so throughout the contract.

This new way of working, new fleet and new technology has presented us with challenges which we are working hard as a waste partnership (with Maidstone and Swale councils) to overcome. We are confident it will deliver long term benefits for residents, despite some initial disruption.

The crews have been getting used to the new routes and technology, and we thank you all for your patience during this time.

The waste we collect in your bins and the frequency of collections has stayed the same. If you want to check your collection days or what bin an item should be placed in head to our website at [www.ashford.gov.uk/waste](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/waste)



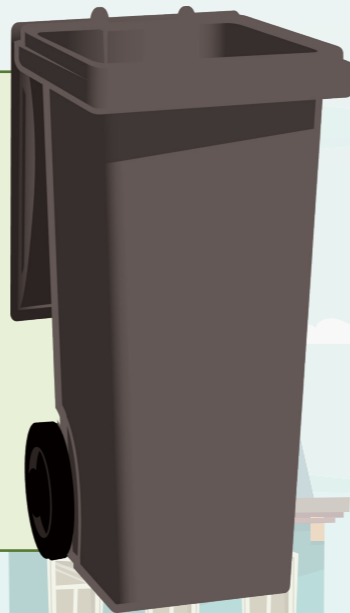
## Missed bins? - what you need to do

Missed bins need to be reported within 48 hours of your collection via our website at [www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-missed-bin](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/report-a-missed-bin)

If you get a 'your road has not been serviced yet' message don't worry! This means we will be coming back to your property, so please leave your bin presented as it will be collected soon.



Make sure your bin is presented by **6am** next to the public highway on your collection day.



Recent figures from Defra show that the Ashford borough has the highest recycling rate in Kent, with a recycling rate of 51% so a massive thank you for your recycling efforts!

## Feed your food caddy every week

Around 30% of your household waste is food! That's almost 100kg per year.

It's still better to use the food you buy but for the food waste you can't avoid get it recycled by using your food caddy.

Food waste placed in your food caddy is collected weekly. It is treated by Anaerobic Digestion

in Kent, producing farm fertiliser which is used back on the fields to grow more food.

We provide the food caddy for free and also one you can use indoors in your kitchen. To order yours or to check what can be placed in your food caddy head to our website at [www.ashford.gov.uk/food-waste](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/food-waste)



# Let your garden waste live on

Thank you to everyone who uses our fortnightly garden waste collection service. Last year, we composted over 8,000 tonnes of garden waste and there's room for more.

Put your garden waste back into the environment by using our garden waste collection service. Garden waste collected is taken to large composting halls and turned into nutrient-rich and peat-free compost that is suitable to use as a soil improver in farming and agriculture.

## How to sign up

Garden waste collections is a paid for service that operates on a rolling year basis. This means you'll renew your service annually exactly one year from the date of joining.

If you don't already have a garden waste bin, one will be delivered within 10 working days from when you sign up and then you are ready to get gardening!

Sign up by heading to our website at [www.ashford.gov.uk/garden-waste](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/garden-waste)

## Yes please ✓

- ✓ Grass cuttings
- ✓ Hedge trimmings
- ✓ Prunings and small branches
- ✓ Weed and leaves
- ✓ Dead plants

## No thanks ✗

- ✗ Building rubble
- ✗ Household or food waste
- ✗ Paints and liquids
- ✗ Logs and tree stumps
- ✗ Plant pots and polystyrene
- ✗ Turf or soil

Last year, we composted over **8,000 tonnes** of garden waste



# Local charities for our local communities

During his term as the 50th Mayor of Ashford, Cllr Larry Krause gives a personal insight into two local charities which serve residents in our borough.

## Men in Sheds

Provides a place where men can meet others to seek friendship and advice on anything from social re-engagement to domestic chores following recent separation or a bereavement. Generally, men are not great at talking about issues so the chance to make new friends and find solutions to their questions is very welcome.

As Larry explains: "The centre is well equipped and has qualified staff who just want to help. Any monies raised from shed projects go towards keeping the service afloat. They could always use more volunteers so if you have the time, they may just have a 'job' for you. Try it, you may just like it, and besides how could you not benefit from meeting others and helping our community?"

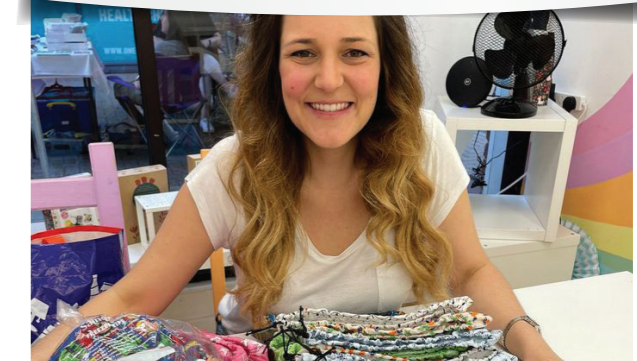
## Friends of the William Harvey Hospital

The Friends have been supporting the hospital since 1977. They've donated millions of pounds of support by funding medical equipment, projects, furniture, gardens, refurbishing rooms, toys and much more. They are guided by an experienced group of volunteer Trustees and Board, with a group of dedicated shop volunteers, ably assisted by a small team of employees.

Local community groups provide the charity with a range of help – from knitting and crafting groups (Made in Ashford Knit and Natter, Willesborough Church Group, Faversham Stitchers, to name a few) to an army of volunteers throughout who make items to sell, or donate to dementia and cancer services, help with events, bake for cake sales, and generally bring joy to the hospital in so many ways.

Charity manager Jill Barringer said: "We are fortunate to receive legacies and donations in wills which helps us to buy large ticket items. We are very pleased to be one of the Mayor's charities and are thankful for his support. Our main source of income is our Friends Shop in the foyer. We turned over £1m in 2023 so if you have ever bought anything from us, you are one of our supporters and we thank you!"

Remember that while money is vital, so is your volunteering time. Both charities do a fantastic amount of free work for Ashford so ask yourself - could you help by giving some of your time? *Cllr Larry Krause*



NHS nurse Patricia setting up the Children's Surgical Cap Project

## Did you know?

The Friends of WHH support the Children's Surgical Cap Project. This was conceived by Patricia Velazquez-Ruta a nurse and designer (@velarutadesigns). The charity provides funding for fun materials to make surgical caps for children. The children then pick the designs and their anaesthetist has to wear the same, be it Barbie pink or a favourite Marvel hero! Children feel part of the team and this has helped with anxiety and recovery. The project was audited and 95% felt this was a good or very good experience to help alleviate the scary prospect of surgery for a child.

To find out more about Men in Sheds email [contact@ashfordvc.org.uk](mailto:contact@ashfordvc.org.uk) or pop along on Tuesday 10-12pm to the shed, located at the Ashford Volunteer Centre.

If you're interested about volunteering at the Friends of WHH, call Kimberley on 01233 633331, ext 723 8269 or visit [www.friendsofthewilliamharveyhospital.co.uk/volunteering](http://www.friendsofthewilliamharveyhospital.co.uk/volunteering)



# Voting at elections has changed



Casting your vote at elections has changed – from redrawn constituency boundaries when you come to choose your MP, to postal vote handling and proxy votes, not forgetting the new voter ID rules that came into effect last year...

**D**id you know that Ashford's single parliamentary constituency has now been split into two new constituencies? This means changes for some voters when it comes to casting your vote at the next General Election.

The two constituencies are called Ashford and the Weald of Kent. The new Ashford constituency has an electorate of 73,546 people, while the Weald of Kent constituency has an electorate of 72,024.

The change means that the borough of Ashford is covered by two new constituencies:

- Ashford – including 24 of Ashford's 39 wards plus wards from Folkestone & Hythe
- Weald of Kent – with 15 of Ashford's wards, including the wards of Charing, Downs North and Downs West

The changes follow a review of parliamentary constituencies conducted by the Boundary Commission for England. It was conducted because the number of electors within each constituency varied due to population changes since the last boundary review. It seeks to rebalance the number of electors each MP represents, resulting in significant change to the existing constituency map.

## What does this change mean for you?

See the new boundary maps for the Ashford and Weald of Kent parliamentary constituencies, together with the list of wards included in both. Remember, this change applies only to voting at a General Election.

## Voter ID

Changes introduced last year require anyone voting in person to bring acceptable photo ID into the polling station. This includes British passports and driving licenses, even if they have expired as long as the photo is recognisable. Anyone without photo ID can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate free of charge at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## Postal vote handling and proxy changes

A law change means that an individual cannot hand in, in person, more than five postal votes plus their own. Nor can candidates or campaigners handle postal votes other than their own or a close relative. Anyone handing in postal votes, either at the council offices or at a polling station, will now have to complete a form and make a declaration. We strongly advise that everyone posts back their postal votes for processing in the usual way.

Proxy rules have changed. People can now only be a proxy (someone officially designated to vote on someone else's behalf) for a maximum of two people from the UK (four people in total including overseas electors).

## Apply for a postal vote online

To vote by post, apply online now at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search apply-postal-vote. Residents must be registered to apply. The application requires a National Insurance number and to upload a clear image of the applicant's signature.

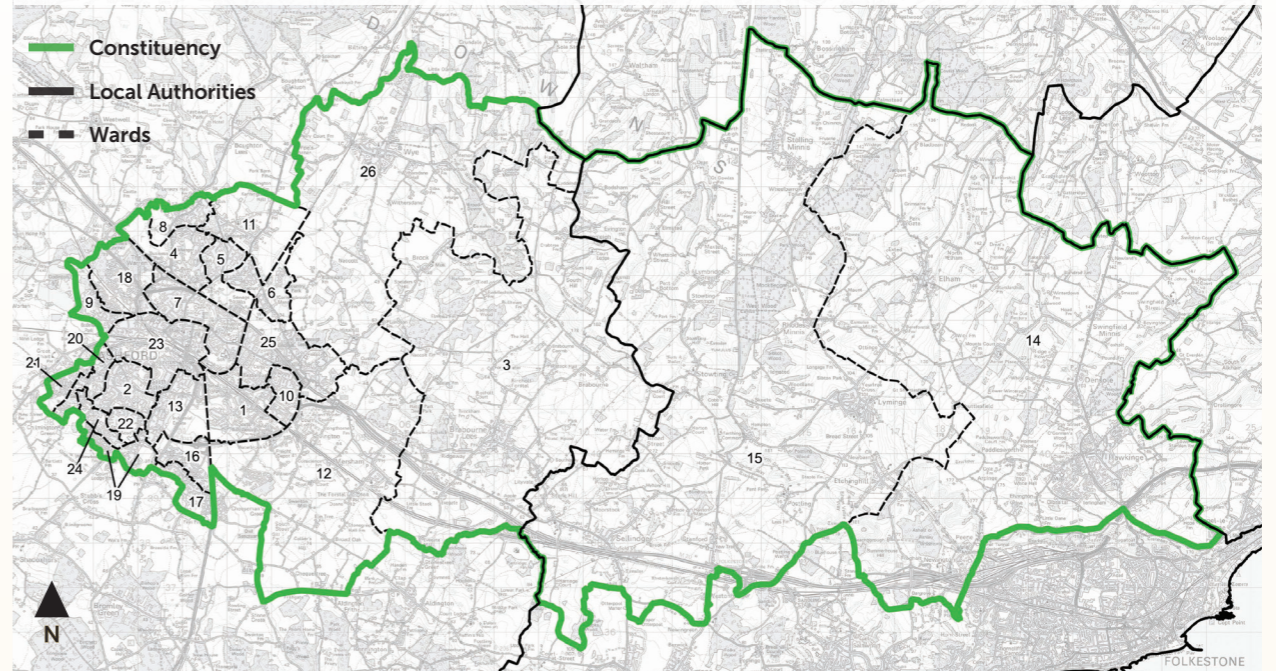
## Apply for a proxy vote online

To apply to vote by proxy, apply now, search apply-proxy-vote at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). Residents must be registered to apply. The application requires a National Insurance number and to upload a clear image of the applicant's signature.

## Applying for a Voter Authority Certificate

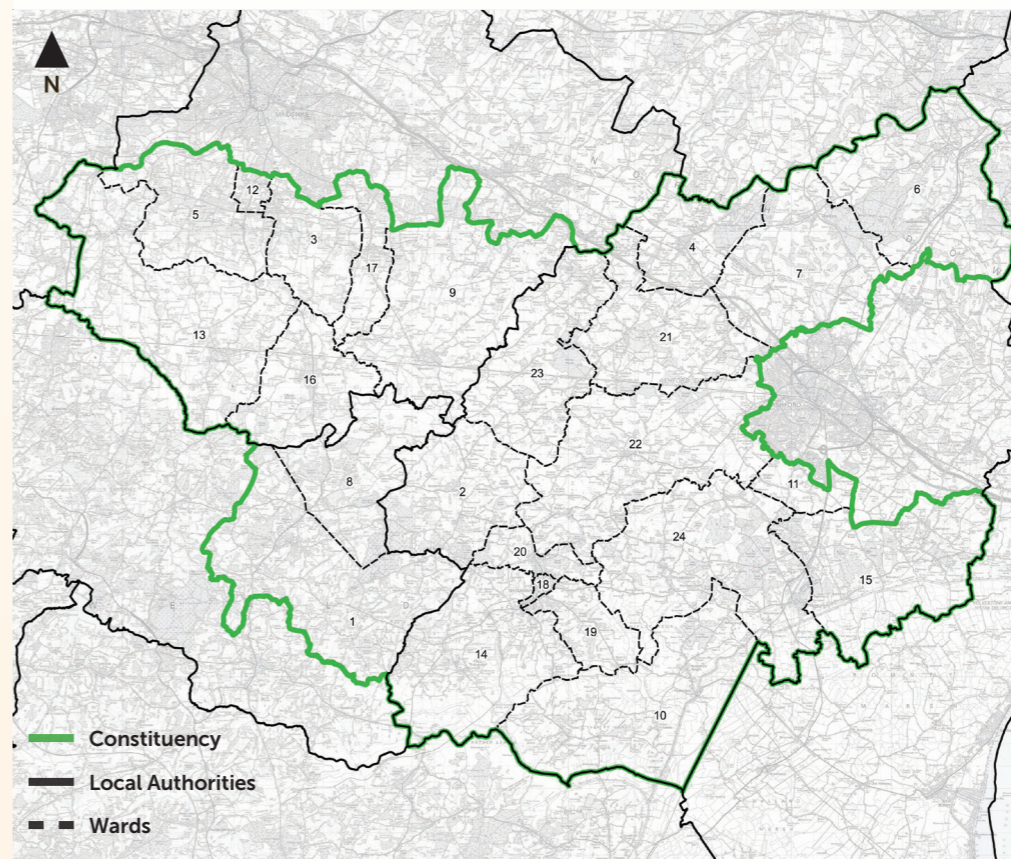
Anyone wanting to vote in a polling station who do not have suitable voter ID can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate online at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and search apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate. Residents must be registered to apply. The application requires a National Insurance number and to upload a photo of the applicant.

## Boundary commission for England - revised proposals for the South East Region Ashford County Constituency - Electorate 73,546



- |                                      |  |                      |                       |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Aylesford & East Stour            | 7. Furley                                  | 13. Norman           | 20. Singleton East    |
| 2. Beaver                            | 8. Goat Lees                               | 14. North Downs East | 21. Singleton West    |
| 3. Bircholt                          | 9. Godinton                                | 15. North Downs West | 22. Stanhope          |
| 4. Bockhanger                        | 10. Highfield                              | 16. Park Farm North  | 23. Victoria          |
| 5. Bybrook                           | 11. Kennington                             | 17. Park Farm South  | 24. Washford          |
| 6. Conningbrook & Little Burton Farm | 12. Mersham, Sevington South with Finberry | 18. Repton           | 25. Willesborough     |
|                                      |  | 19. Roman            | 26. Wye with Hinxhill |

## Boundary commission for England - revised proposals for the South East Region Weald of Kent Constituency - Electorate 70,110



1. Benenden and Cranbrook
2. Biddenden
3. Boughton Monchelsea & Chart Sutton
4. Charing
5. Coxheath & Hunton
6. Downs North
7. Downs West
8. Frittenden & Sissinghurst
9. Headcorn
10. Isle of Oxney
11. Kingsnorth Village & Bridgefield
12. Loose
13. Marden & Yalding
14. Rolvenden & Tenterden West
15. Saxon Shore
16. Staplehurst
17. Sutton Valence & Langley
18. Tenterden North
19. Tenterden South
20. Tenterden St. Michael's
21. Upper Weald
22. Weald Central
23. Weald North
24. Weald South

For more information visit

[www.ashford.gov.uk/your-council/register-to-vote-and-elections](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/your-council/register-to-vote-and-elections)

# Are you looking after your wellbeing?

We always tend to look after others that are closest to us, but what about you and how are you feeling? We're shining the spotlight on services that put your wellbeing first...

## Singleton pop up café and info hub

The café at Singleton and Great Chart Village Hall opened in 2018 and is run by Great Chart and Singleton Parish Council. It provides a safe and friendly environment to people who come along for a chat or who want to find out more information about the services available. Residents can also talk to parish councillors about any concerns.

Themed events have attracted guest speakers from Kent Police, Fraud Watch, Kent Fire and Rescue, Neighbourhood Watch and WI Godinton Group who have provided residents with tips on how to save on utility bills and more. A pop up café session led to the installation of an outdoor gym at Great Chart play area in 2019 to help older folk to keep fit, socialise and improve mental and physical wellbeing. [www.greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk](http://www.greatchartsingleton-pc.gov.uk)



The parish council working in partnership with Kent Police and Neighbourhood Watch to support residents



All smiles from local residents attending a Lent Group

## Frankies

Frankies is a new community café hosted at St Francis Church in South Ashford, which is part of the new St Francis Hub. Run by volunteers, it provides homemade cakes and offers a warm space to meet up with family or friends.

For grown-ups who come with young children, a small toy area is available allowing you to enjoy a hot drink while the children are entertained. Dogs are welcome providing they are well behaved and kept on a lead. While refreshments are free, any contribution is welcomed. Don't be afraid to come on your own as you are guaranteed a warm welcome. Café open every Wednesday from 2-4pm.

## Montfort Manor

This care home in Willesborough hosts a friendship café where everyone is welcome to attend, whether you're a carer, a relative of someone living in the home, or simply if you need a bit of support. Refreshments provided. A dementia cinema is open to anyone, regardless of whether they have been diagnosed as living with dementia (and yes popcorn is included)! Menopause Mingle enables people going through their menopause journey to come along and chat.

Friendship café takes place on the first Wednesday (10am-12pm) and third Thursday (2-4pm) of every month. Dementia cinema is available on the second Thursday of every month from 10.30am. [www.careuk.com](http://www.careuk.com)



Attendees having a great time at a friendship café

# Food Friends



Wrapped with love

A registered charity working to combat loneliness through food and friendship. Their meal sharing initiative connects volunteers who are looking to share extra portions of home cooked food with a neighbour, combining a nutritious meal delivered with friendly company.

The volunteering opportunity is rewarding, built on people's love of food and its ability to connect those who would otherwise never cross paths. Their volunteer cooks have shared around 10,000 meals across East Kent. The Ashford Food Friends team is excited to get people cooking, sharing and caring for one another. Receiving a meal is free and volunteers are DBS and reference checked. If you fancy volunteering to share your home-cooking or are interested in receiving a meal, visit [www.food-friends.co.uk](http://www.food-friends.co.uk) or call 01227 250 410.

## What is a 'community café'?

Community cafes are non-profit which means they offer food and drinks at low cost, pay as you feel or free. A local and friendly place for people to connect, work and relax. Catch up with friends and make new ones within your community.

## Sk8side Youth Centre

A place where young people between the ages of 8-19 can express themselves, look after their mental wellbeing and make friends. It's free to become a member, simply pop into the centre to sign up. Activities also include pool, table tennis, arts and crafts, music and free skateboarding tuition.

Supper at Sk8side provides all members with a free hot meal, including dessert and fruit every day of the week at 5pm except Wednesdays.

Where: Sk8side Youth Centre is at Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1XZ. Sk8side is also available in Tenterden while additional outreach projects take place at Bockhanger and Willesborough. Visit [www.sk8side.co.uk](http://www.sk8side.co.uk)



Winners of the 2023 'Superteams' competition which takes place every summer

## Other places to give your wellbeing a boost where everyone is welcome

**One You Shop**, 25 Park Mall, Ashford. Free, walk-in lifestyle and health services. [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/one-you-shop](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/one-you-shop)

**EC30**, Recreation Ground Road, Tenterden. Services helping residents improve their wellbeing. [www.ec30.co.uk](http://www.ec30.co.uk)

**The Beehive**, North Street, Ashford. Free clothing and support to women who need it [www.beehiveashford.com](http://www.beehiveashford.com)

**Jean Mealham Pop In Centre**, Woodchurch. Social gathering every Wednesday 2-4pm featuring a quiz, raffle and refreshments. Fridays from 12-2pm for free soup, bread, coffee, cake and company. Call 07798566849.

**Repton Connect**, Repton Avenue, Ashford. People's Pantry scheme provides a community shop allowing up to £20 worth of shopping for £6. Community Fridge is available for residents to exchange surplus food and help cut food waste. Emergency food parcels available for those in need. [www.reptonct.uk](http://www.reptonct.uk)

Visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help)



Discover leisure with a purpose at Freedom Leisure, a not-for-profit charitable leisure and cultural trust dedicated to enhancing lives. From excellent facilities to fostering community spirit, we're committed to creating spaces where everyone can thrive. Join us in our mission to make every moment count.

Embark on your journey to a healthier, happier you today! Scan the QR code and provide your details to enjoy a **FREE FIRST MONTH** and **NO JOINING FEE** offer. Gain access to our state-of-the-art gym, invigorating swim facilities, and dynamic group exercise classes tailored to your fitness goals. Whether it's toning muscles, improving cardiovascular health, or refining swimming techniques, we're here to support you every step of the way.

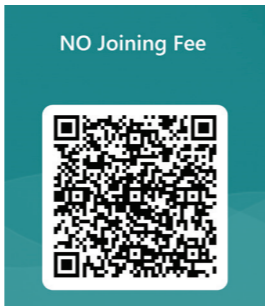


- ★★★★★ "Friendly staff and very professional!" - Geanina, Stour
- ★★★★★ "Highly recommend Tenterden swimming pool! Lovely time there on the flume and wave machine and the inflatable looks awesome! Not too busy and lovely friendly lifeguards and Christmas music to top it all off! Thank you so much for such a lovely time!" - Georgina, Tenterden
- ★★★★★ "Great place, watched football there, very nice athletics stadium. Nice coffee shop etc, good car park." - Don, Julie Rose

**Stour Centre - 01233 663503**  
Station Approach, Ashford TN23 1ET

**Julie Rose Stadium - 01233 613131**  
Willesborough Road, Kennington, Ashford TN24 9QX

**Tenterden Leisure Centre - 01580 475014**  
Recreation Ground Road, Tenterden TN30 6RA



# Apply for HUG2 funding now



We are encouraging as many eligible residents as possible to apply for energy efficiency and heating upgrades via the Home Upgrade Grant – Phase 2 (HUG2). Households struggling with high energy bills and vulnerable residents facing impossible choices to keep warm may worry during the colder months, and this government grant could help them.

Open for applications until the end of 2024, HUG2 funds energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating

systems, targeting the most inefficiently heated homes (e.g. an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) between D and G) which are not heated by gas heating systems. Your home must be heated by alternative fuels such as electricity, oil, liquid propane gas and solid fuels.

Homeowners and private tenants on low incomes can check whether their household is eligible at [www.ashford.gov.uk/hug2](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/hug2) - there you will find a link to the application page at [hugapply.co.uk](http://hugapply.co.uk).

## Our survey said...

As the infographic on this page shows, nearly two thirds (63.2%) of our social housing tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by the council. Now an action plan has been created to address issues raised by the feedback and to drive up quality standards further.

The results provide an insight into how our tenants feel about our various services, and while we are performing relatively well in certain areas there are still a lot of areas that need improving. For more details visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-survey](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-survey)



64.7% are satisfied with the repairs service



67.0% feel they are treated fairly and with respect



72.0% satisfied with how safe their home is



59.7% satisfied with how informed they were about things that matter to them



63.2%

satisfied with the service provided by Ashford Borough Council

## Save water - and money

A water saving device being fitted to 5,000-plus council-owned homes could save tenants hundreds of pounds in their water and energy bills. The Water Flow device regulates the flow of water and stabilises water pressure, resulting in water being heated more efficiently. The savings in water quantities will also help to unlock new council housing developments. The device is being fitted at no charge to tenants and is being carried out by Cenergist, a council-appointed contractor. See [www.ashford.gov.uk/water-saving-devices](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/water-saving-devices)

# WIN TICKETS FOR GODINTON HOUSE & GARDENS



Godinton House & Gardens is Ashford's hidden gem where sheep graze in ancient parkland graced by magnificent trees. Wander through the peaceful 12-acre formal gardens to discover an elegant Italian Garden, a pretty Rose Garden and a Walled Garden filled with flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Birdsong fills the air in the wild garden and from the lawned terraces soak up views over the estate and Godinton House, a 600-year old red brick property that retains the warmth of a much-loved country home.

Homemade teas are served in the house on Fridays and Saturdays while the ticket office is open from Tuesday to Sunday selling tea and coffee, cakes and ice creams.

The gardens are open Tuesday to Sunday and Bank Holiday

Mondays, 12:30pm-5:30pm (last entry 4:30pm). Last day Sunday 13 October 2024. The house is open Friday and Saturday until Saturday 28 September 2024. Tours at 1.30pm, 2pm, 2.30pm, 3pm, 3.30pm and 4pm. The tearoom is open Friday and Saturday until Saturday 28 September 2024 (for our house and garden visitors only). No reservations taken. Entry to the gardens is free for under 16s.

We are offering a prize of two House & Garden tickets and a complimentary cream tea for two for readers to enjoy this magnificent historic attraction, to be used during the 2024 open season.

For more information, including details of special events planned for 2024, visit [www.godintonhouse.co.uk](http://www.godintonhouse.co.uk)



Kent & East Sussex Railway is celebrating its 50th anniversary and to help mark this special event it is offering five family passes to *Ashford For You* readers. Each pass enables four people (two adults and two children or one adult and three children) to enjoy a fun-filled day. Passes are valid for one visit, for one year from date of issue, and exclude refreshments and special events. For full details of how this golden anniversary is being celebrated please visit [kesr.org.uk](http://kesr.org.uk)

For a truly memorable adventure, jump aboard a heritage steam or diesel train and sit back in comfort to ride through the unspoilt countryside from Tenterden to Bodiam. You can even pre-book a kids munch bag for them and treat yourself to a cream tea or ploughmans. We're dog friendly so the family pooch can come too!



# WIN 5 FAMILY PASSES TO HELP MARK GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

To enter your name in our prize draw either:

\* **Email** the editorial team at [competition@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:competition@ashford.gov.uk) – put **KESR competition** or **Godinton House & Gardens** 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 **KESR competition** or **Godinton House & Gardens** on the card.

We will contact the winner to request consent to provide your contact details 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 Friday 7 June 2024**. 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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Our state-of-the-art facilities and seasoned instructors ensure that you receive hands-on training and theoretical knowledge that are essential for your success in a plumbing or electrical trade.

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- Level 2 Plumbing Studies
- Level 2 Electrical Installations (Building and Structures)

Sign up online for courses with flexible start dates that fit around your life.



## EKC Ashford Training Centre

Our dedicated adult training centre offers a range of work-ready courses that will help you step into a new career and give you a fresh start.

You'll be supported by our team of professional trainers, obtain relevant certificates and qualifications and discover skills that will prepare you for job interviews and employment.



[ekctraining.ac.uk](http://ekctraining.ac.uk)



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