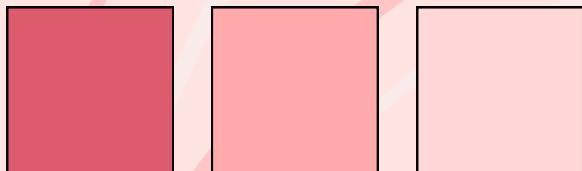


# the ashford freedom flyer!



February  
Edition



# PEOPLE!



## Ashford Hero Awards!

The Ashford Hero Awards 2026 at the Stour Centre celebrated the incredible people and organisations making a real difference in our community. From acts of bravery and resilience to outstanding volunteerism, fundraising, and community impact, the evening honoured those whose dedication, kindness, and courage inspire us all.

## Meet Conor, our E&S Ambassador at Stour Centre!

At the Stour Centre, we are committed to making everyday operations more sustainable. Conor, our Environmental and Sustainability Ambassador, leads initiatives to reduce waste, improve energy efficiency, and help staff and visitors make greener choices. Together, we are taking real steps towards a healthier planet. If you would like to share any ideas, Conor is here to talk!



## Ashford Athletic Club Shines at Kent Champs!

It was medals galore for Ashford Athletic Club at the Sports Hall Athletics Kent Championships at the Stour Centre in January. The Under 11 boys were crowned champions, while the Under 11 girls proudly took home silver, showing off the club's talent and dedication across the board. A fantastic achievement for all involved!

## Elliot Takes to the Pitch for Charity!

We are proud to share that our one and only Elliot from the Stour Centre was selected to represent the non-celebrity team at this amazing fundraising event. He took to the pitch alongside stars from shows including Love Island and EastEnders, all in support of the fantastic Dancing Eyes charity. We are incredibly proud of Elliot for being part of such a brilliant cause.



## Supporting Emma and Andy on Their Everest Base Camp Trek!

Our Stour Centre staff members Emma and Andy Curry are taking on the Everest Base Camp Trek from 7th to 22nd March 2026, raising vital funds for Pilgrims Hospice. Please scan the QR code to donate and support them on this incredible challenge.



# COMMUNITY!



## Swimathon!

Join us for Swimathon in March! Take on a personal swimming challenge, set your own distance, and enjoy the motivation that comes from being part of a nationwide event. Scan the QR code to find your nearest participating centre, check their event date, and sign up to make every length count in the pool.

## Thank you to the Oliver Steeper Foundation!

We are incredibly grateful to the Oliver Steeper Foundation for generously funding a LifeVac for the Stour Centre. This vital device provides an extra layer of safety, helping staff respond quickly in choking emergencies and potentially saving lives. Their dedication and support are a powerful reminder of how one family's commitment can make a difference in keeping our community safe.



## Rumble Wrestling Return!

Get ready for an action-packed afternoon as Rumble Wrestling brings high-flying moves, thrilling matches, and family fun to the Stour Centre on Saturday 7th February at 4pm. Scan the QR code to grab your tickets and join the excitement!

## Reclaim the Night is Back!

By popular demand, Reclaim the Night returns to Julie Rose Stadium on Monday 23rd February! Join us for a free 5k women's night run, an event designed to help women feel safe and confident during the darker winter months. Scan the QR code for more information, and to book your free space!



## 'THRIVE 26'



## Thrive 26 at the Stour Centre!

Tickets are now on sale for Thrive 26, celebrating International Women's Day and women's lifestyle, health and empowerment. With 60 stalls, public speakers and live demonstrations, it promises to be a fantastic day on Saturday 7th March 2026 from 10am to 4pm. Scan the QR code to get your ticket.



# **FREE DOM LIFE STORIES!**



**Meet Paula!**

## **What sport do you compete in, and how did you first get involved?**

I compete in short-mat bowls and first got involved when I moved to Park Farm and was looking round the gym and saw it being played in the hall. We were invited in to have a go and were immediately smitten with the sport.

## **What has been your proudest achievement in your sporting career so far?**

I am part of the England Ladies team, so my proudest achievement is being selected to play for England.

## **Who inspires you most in your sport and why?**

I am inspired by many excellent short-mat bowls players from many countries that I compete against but I am also inspired by the bowlers who continue to bowl into their 90s, by those with physical disabilities who manage to adapt their techniques to be able to bowl and by the family teams encompassing 3 generations. Not many sports can boast those things.

## **What advice would you give to young people who want to follow in your footsteps?**

My advice would be to have a go. You never know what you may be good at until you try it.

## **Where do you see yourself in five years' time within your sporting career?**

In 5 years time I would like to still be in the England team and winning lots of competitions.

## **If you could compete anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?**

I would like to play in Norway and Belgium with the Short-Mat Players Tour because I would be seeing new countries and meeting new competitors.

## **What does being part of the FLAIR membership mean to you?**

Being part of the FLAIR membership means that I can keep up my physical and mental health to the required level to be able to play in top-class competitions. Often the competition days can be more than 12 hours of bowling and I need to keep up my stamina to be able to compete.



# DISCOVER!



Come & try out your local leisure facilities with a day of fitness on us



**1 DAY FREE PASS\***



## One Day Free Pass!

This one day free pass gives you the chance to experience everything our centres have to offer. Enjoy full access to our facilities and see how Freedom Leisure can fit into your routine. Scan the QR code for more information and to find out how to get started.



## Swim Stronger by Summer!

Build confidence in the water and develop strong swimming skills with our swimming lessons. Our lessons follow Swim England's Learn to Swim pathway, giving your child a structured way to develop at their own pace. If you're interested in swimming lessons with us, scan the QR code to enquire today.



“We visited the leisure pool. The lazy river and family flume were great.”

- Jane, Stour Centre



“Amazing track.”

- Oluwasayo, Julie Rose Stadium



“This is our go-to place for badminton, mainly because there aren't any other indoor courts available to my knowledge in Ashford. The staff are friendly and helpful, and we enjoy playing here regularly.”

- Aaron, Stour Centre



- Sjouke, Tenterden Leisure Centre



**BE A PART OF THE ASHFORD FREEDOM FLYER!**

If you have an idea for an article, an update from your area or a story to share, please email [dannii.woodward@freedom-leisure.co.uk](mailto:dannii.woodward@freedom-leisure.co.uk)