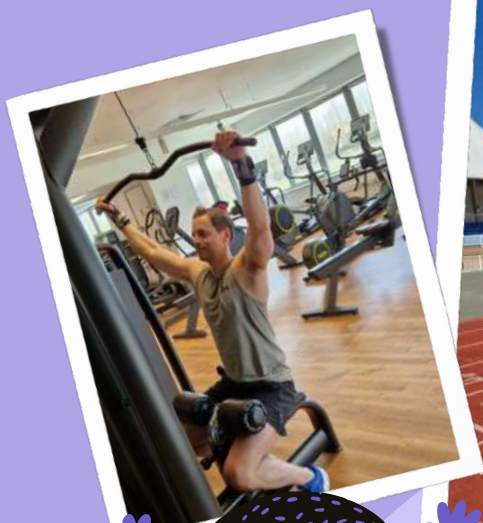


the ashford freedom flyer!

October 2026

As October arrives, we're looking forward to everything autumn has to offer. With half-term just around the corner and plenty going on in the community, there's lots to enjoy this month.



PEOPLE



Blast from the Past!

Take a trip back to 1994, when Olympic swimmer and television personality Sharron Davies officially opened the gym at the Stour Centre. This memorable moment marked an exciting chapter in the centre's history, bringing a touch of sporting stardom to Ashford and inspiring the local community to embrace fitness and wellbeing.

Another Record-Breaking Run for Doug!

Congratulations to Doug Lucas, who has once again broken his own M75 400m record. After recently achieving a time of 70.58 seconds, Doug went even faster this weekend, clocking an impressive 69.96 seconds. The performance has earned him 7th place in the world rankings. A fantastic achievement, well done!



Celebrating 44 Years of Shelley!

Last month, we said goodbye to Shelley, our incredible trampoline coach, who has been inspiring and teaching generations of participants at the centre since 1982. For an amazing 44 years, Shelley has shared her passion, dedication and expertise, helping thousands of children and adults build confidence, learn new skills and create lasting memories. Everyone at the Stour Centre would like to thank Shelley for her outstanding commitment and wish her all the very best in her retirement.



Ashford Athletics Club Women Promoted to Division I!

Ashford Athletics Club's masters women have secured promotion to Division I of the Southern Counties Veterans League after an outstanding season. A key home win, six victories at the final fixture in Tonbridge and a new club record in the 4x200m relay helped seal second place overall and a well-deserved promotion for next year. Congratulations to the team on a fantastic achievement!



Maiden Fifty in Academy Colours!

Ella Darlington, FLAIR Athlete, delivered a standout performance for Surrey Academy, scoring her maiden fifty against Yorkshire Academy in a thrilling T20 encounter. Showing composure, confidence and attacking intent at the crease, Ella finished unbeaten on 66 runs from just 54 balls, helping to drive Surrey's batting effort. Reaching this important milestone is a testament to her hard work and development, and marks another exciting step forward in her cricketing journey. Congratulations, Ella, on a fantastic innings and a well-deserved maiden Academy fifty!



COMMUNITY



Supporting Men's Mental Health

The Stour Centre has partnered with MenTalk to provide a new mental health support group for men. Taking place every Tuesday from 7pm to 8:30pm, the sessions offer a welcoming space to connect, talk and access support. Attendance is free of charge, with no booking required.



Walking Together for Nepal Flood Relief

Members of the local community came together to Julie Rose Stadium for the Walk for Nepal Flood Relief, raising awareness and support for families affected by devastating flooding in Nepal. The event highlighted the strength of community spirit and the generosity of everyone who took part in this worthwhile cause.



Community Cup Brings Teams Together!

Spearpoint was proud to host the 16th Sagarmatha Gurkha Nepalese Community Cup in August, welcoming teams and supporters for a celebration of sport, community and friendly competition. A total of 19 teams took part in the tournament, with 12 teams competing in the main category and seven teams in the super veteran category, making it another successful and well-attended event.

Rumble Wrestling Returns to Ashford!

Rumble Wrestling is back at the Stour Centre on Saturday 10th October at 4pm for an action-packed afternoon of family entertainment. Expect high-flying action, larger-than-life characters and plenty of excitement for fans of all ages. Scan the QR code to book your tickets.



Reclaim the Night Returns!

Reclaim the Night is back at Julie Rose Stadium on Monday 2nd November! This free women's 5K night run is designed to empower women and promote safe running during the darker winter months. Places are limited, so scan the QR code to book your spot today.





FREEDOM LIFE STORIES!

Meet Aditi, one of our FLAIR athletes!



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

I compete in cricket. Being born in India, the sport has always been a huge part of my life; it's in my blood. My father was my first coach and introduced me to the game at a young age. From there, I progressed through my state's age-group pathway, which helped shape me as a cricketer and deepen my passion for the sport.

What is your current national ranking?

I currently compete in women's cricket at Canterbury Cricket Club and Men's Cricket at both Folkestone and Stowting Cricket Clubs, consistently performing against high-quality opposition and continuing to push towards higher representative honours.

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

Cricket has given me some incredible opportunities beyond just playing. I've had the chance to feature in three Bollywood films; Shabaash Mithu, Mr. & Mrs. Mahi, and Ghoomer, as well as appear in several music videos. It has also allowed me to grow as an influencer and be invited to a range of events and platforms. Being able to combine my love for cricket with these opportunities has been something I'm really proud of.

Who inspires you most in your sport and why?

I'm particularly inspired by Australian cricketer Ellyse Perry. As an all-rounder, the way she combines skill with intent, confidence, and resilience really stands out. She plays positively in all situations and backs herself under pressure, which is something I try to bring into my own game.

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

Back yourself and enjoy the process. There will be challenges, but consistency, hard work, and belief in your ability are key. Don't be afraid to play your own game and express yourself.

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

In the next five years, I see myself playing at a high level in England, with the goal of qualifying in 2027 and representing Kent County Cricket Club. I want to continue developing my game, performing consistently, and pushing towards professional opportunities within the county system.

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

I would choose to compete here in the UK. I love playing cricket here. The standard is high, the conditions challenge you in different ways, and the cricket culture is incredibly strong. It's an environment that pushes me to keep improving, and it genuinely feels like home.

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

Being part of FLAIR means a great deal to me. It's an opportunity to be recognised, supported, and connected with a community that empowers female athletes. I'm proud to be part of a network that celebrates ambition and helps elevate women in sport.





DISCOVER!



Don't ghost your fitness goals this October!

Make this the month you commit to feeling your best. From 1st to 20th October, join your local Freedom Leisure centre for just £20 and take the first step towards a healthier, happier you. This frightfully good offer won't be around for long, so scan the QR code to enquire or sign up online today.



Boo-st their confidence in the water!

Give your little monsters a skill for life this Halloween season. Our swimming lessons help build confidence, improve water safety and develop swimming ability in a fun and supportive environment. Scan the QR code to enquire about swimming lessons at your local Freedom Leisure centre.

Member Testimonials



"Went swimming on a rainy day visiting family. Little one loved the lazy river. Clean and tidy. Great for all ages."

- Sherrie-Ann, Stour Centre



"Great staff and good gym."

- Richard, Julie Rose Stadium



"Fun experience today. We only used a pool site with small kids. I loved that the pool wasn't too deep, 1.6 deepest end so felt comfortable with it. Can't fault it from my experience. Great lifeguards. Honestly. Such young and responsible. Thank You."

- Magdalena, 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