



ACHIEVEMENTS 2022

Together we can craft a better future!

Craftship Enterprise CIC manages Made in Ashford and The Craftship:

We support local creative businesses and creativity in the community. We reinvest our profits back into these areas to fulfil the values that mean so much to us.



It feels so wonderful to be back to a normal trading year with no lockdowns or shop closures but 2022 has still been a challenging time in retail, with the cost of living crisis causing many to tighten their spending habits. Despite this we have just seen our best ever trading year in Made in Ashford which we are so grateful for. Of course these profits go back into supporting other things we do, such as events at The Craftship where we offer subsidised creative sessions for all ages. This year we have seen a large increase in people needing to use those subsidised places to have time to create for their wellbeing and to simply keep warm. We are proud we can offer a creative community hub in the centre of Ashford with the continued support of Ashford Borough Council.

Our beliefs and values through 2023: **Creativity, kindness, sustainability, to inspire, have fun!**

This year has had some fantastic highlights which are shared in this report. For the second year The Craftship has been awesome and is growing every month, with new collaborations and different ways to serve our community & the environment to craft a better future! I am also very pleased that Made in Ashford turned 7 this year which feels like quite a milestone. It fills me with joy how well the shop is loved and the community of creatives & friends who have developed from it. I am a massive fan of the young makers space which launched this year and is growing the next generation of makers & entrepreneurs. They are a big inspiration to me!

Made in Ashford



Made in Ashford saw some more DIY inside this year adding shelves & spaces to house even more makers. We have had a shop floor change around this year too and added some craft kits from the Craftship to the shop floor to help us raise funds.



73 local Kentish businesses were supported to sell their products, grow their businesses, skill share and become part of our community of creatives.

Our members were really involved in making our windows and had massive volunteer sessions where we made bright banners, sharing skills and laughs!



This year saw the introduction of the Young Makers Spaces – a section of the shop where we show case the creative work of young entrepreneurs.

We currently have **6** young people benefiting from this space and the additional support it brings.

10 Artists have showcased work in our Starewell Gallery.



We have had 3 team social sessions including bowling, our birthday making party & xmas party. We always try to support other local businesses while we are at it and frequent many an Ashfordian night spot!



Incubator space Crystals of the Moon joined us and took on the incubator space which was quite a small section upstairs and it soon became apparent that they needed more space, so we did a big refit upstairs, worked really hard building table tops, relaying carpet tiles & moved loads of stuff over to CS. Crystals of the Moon was very successful there but returned to the shop floor in order to work less in the shop. This then made way for a new business to join us in the space and try to launch their business. BeFandabbydozy joined us before Christmas making slightly risqué slogan items. Make sure you pop upstairs to take a look.



THE CRAFTSHIP



1,842
Creative
participants

934
Free places

**Workshop
leaders 19**

Workshops & courses offered:

Fairy garden making, pattern course, sew a tote bag, sew a pencil case, gel printing, print to a cup, print to a coaster, fabric weaving, lantern making, banner making, wreath making, zine workshops, watercolour, oil painting, silver clay, silver ring, silver earrings, lino printing, drumming sessions, print your own t shirt, calligraphy and more!



Studio

We had a pop up studio in our Kitchen space when we collaborated with Tania Paige Designs. Tania decorated the space beautifully, held a lot of her own workshops & worked on many of her own projects. She helped us on the shop floor and was an asset to our team. Her successful time with us encouraged her to take on her own larger studio space & shop at Brogdale!



**Outlet for
24 craft kit
businesses**



**9 Volunteers
712 Volunteer hours**

Yarn Club Achievements:

- Made & donated lap blankets, baby items, gloves, cushion covers & more to the William Harvey Hospital shop to help raise funds for them
- Enjoyed making quirky innocent smoothie hats to raise money for Age UK
- Created crochet bunting for the queens jubilee tree trail in Ashford
- Made poppies for the Royal British Legion for them to sell & raise funds
- Made angel decorations for the friends of William Harvey Xmas tree in Hothfield church
- Made blue & yellow flowers to sell to support the fund for the war in Ukraine
- Made a Happy 2023 knitted sign for the Craftship window!

They are currently working on making squares for blankets to be donated to a good cause no doubt!



Kippys paint your own pottery joined us this year. To be able to give a town centre presence to such a well-loved Ashford business is a privilege. In turn it has brought us new footfall and helped us engage with so many new customers as well as enjoying painting all of those pots!

We have expanded the seating capacity and table space in the Craftship to accommodate even more makers at once! In our shop space we have 24 national & local craft kit creating businesses selling here. A big thing for us this year was the introduction of a permanent scrap store or Pre-loved Craft space. This is where we sell donated arts & crafts supplies. We have been given so much and we are so grateful. This helps us to put on free craft sessions using the donations themselves and the money raised from selling it too. In some circumstances it saves this stuff from landfill too! A big thanks to our volunteers for processing & pricing these donations!

We hosted - 234 regular clubs, **42** workshops, **12** private group sessions, **8** parties & **36** completely free sessions!

We also worked with other organisations to offer creative projects, team awaydays & workshops for good in many ways.

These included:

Find a Voice, young carers, NHS sexual health team, the Probation service, various WI groups, Scouts, Brownie groups as well as several schools & various council departments.



**8 Shop
Team Members**

Regular Clubs: Story, Craft & Play, Nature Explorers, Afterschool Art Club, Sketch Book Club, Adult Art Club, Yarn Club, Free Family Craft Club, Quilting Club, Sewing Club, Home Ed Art Club.



E-commerce – website

We have spent lots of time trying to grow our website this year and have been updating all of our product photography. We have been adding new lines and intend to represent the whole of Made in Ashford on our website in the coming year. This is not just a selling platform but a showcase of the makers we have in the shop. We hope it can support the sales of the businesses that are a part of our social enterprise and also raise funds for us to continue to do the work we are doing. We have also used our platform to distribute free colouring in sheets & activities to help creativity be more accessible to more folks.



Sales

Made in Ashford had an inconsistent year with sales and our peak Christmas season came to us late. It was all a bit of a worry but then we managed to have our most successful year to date! We traded +19% on the previous year 2021 although due to being closed for 3 months in the final lockdown does not give the best representation so we also did +4% on 2019! We have also managed to sustain & increase some of our other revenue streams in 2022 such as the Makers Market, the website, ebay for change & hiring the facilities in The Craftship.

249 parcels filled with orders were sent from our website & ebay.

Ebay for change

We spent some time really getting to grips with using ebay as a platform to sell the products from our makers. This will spread the message of buying social & the impact it can have for good in communities as well as for individuals. It has been really successful for sales and we look forward to another year of making that work better for us.

Paid Roles

We had our first ever employee in the form of a Kickstarter. We now have 5 team members who work for us on a regular basis. We have grown our freelance adhoc team who we work with on various projects and try to share this work out between those with the right skill set who are part of the Made in Ashford team. We have worked with over 20 local creative businesses and artists to deliver a variety of projects throughout the year.



Markets



In 2022 we held **14** Makers Markets with **172** creative businesses. **8** charity stalls were included for free such as the repair café.

We also held a virtual market for our birthday and **3** pre loved craft markets that turned into a permanent scrap store.



Media Coverage



BBC radio Kent interviews x 2, Radio Ashford interview, Muddy Stiletto's feature. Channel 4's Steps packed lunch featured our jubilee activity pack.

Awards

Runners up at the Ashford business awards for creative digital and business woman category.

Winner of the best lifestyle store for Muddy Stiletto's Kent.



Recognition

I was invited to the Mayor's Parlour for tea with the Mayor Cllr. Jenny Webb who I not only had a wonderful chat with (as always) and a delicious treat of tea, sandwiches & cakes but she also presented me with a "certificate of achievement - in recognition for the exemplary service to the citizens of the borough & beyond by providing & encouraging creative art in the heart of the community with passion and dedication". This was such a surprise & one of my proudest moments!



Sustainability

We continue to be more sustainable in our practices and reduce our impact on the environment. We do not let new products into the store wrapped in plastic packaging and we try to avoid any single use packaging altogether where possible. We use a lot of donated craft materials for workshops & clubs in the Craftship which is not only thrifty but stops unnecessary consumption of goods, reducing our dependence on natural resources in this world.



Safety

The safety of our team is always very important to us and also the safety of our community as a whole. This is why it was so important for us to join the safe spaces programme and offer both of our shops as places members of the public can go if they need a space to feel safe. We continue to use Ashford Partnership against Crime radio & platforms. We want to do our part in addressing anti-social behaviour in our town and keeping our place safe.

Our social impact

Another year of working hard to give creativity to our community which can help with the symptoms of anxiety, depression, loneliness and even dementia, according to research. It aids well-being, builds connection and makes our town a good place to be, taking pressure off other services locally.

Our gorgeous shop is continuing to support local creative makers and delivering good sales for them. We are a supportive network with many things in place to help each other and have fun together! The Craftship has been successful in providing a safe, warm & welcoming space for the community to create, learn skills and meet new people. We have been a place that organisations have partnered with to fulfil their creative objectives too. This in turn has increased footfall into the town & increased pride in Ashford which is what ABC set out to do with the Made in Ashford project. We work with all ages in our community from preschoolers to older people. It is a privilege to see such diversity in those we support & who support us. We work with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. We are a predominantly female organisation and seem to have higher proportion of people who identify as female as our participants & beneficiaries. There are many people who are neuro diverse in our organisation. We try to make our space accessible & welcoming for those with disabilities.

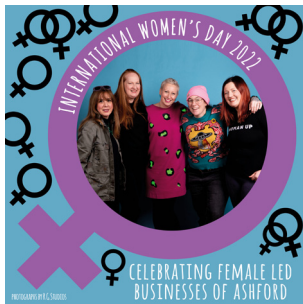


Projects, Events & Collabs:

International Womens Day Campaign

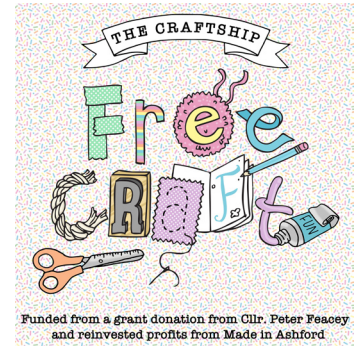
We brought together a group of female founding businesses to show case and co-organised a campaign featuring them.

We packaged up the campaign and circulated it to be shared across multiple local social media accounts to celebrate & highlight the achievements of local female biz women.



Free Family Craft

We were very fortunate to have been given a donation towards our free family craft on a Saturday by Cllr. Peter Feacey. This enabled us to support lots of families to create together, form stronger bonds, meet new families, learn new skills & positively benefit their wellbeing through creative practices. We also used funds from those who play the Ashford community lottery & support us.



The Queens jubilee

We were commissioned by Park Mall to make a selfie throne fit for a queen. We used sumptuous felt and opulent golden trim with a hand painted crown fixed to the top. Many photos were taken perched regally on the bench across the jubilee celebrations. We were even visited by Dominic King from Radio Kent to feature the bench on his show! We also decided to make an activity book & DIY bunting packs for the occasion and draft in several designers from Made in Ashford to help us create something unique & awesome. We worked with 6 artists and created a book that you could buy physical copies of and download for free to print at home (which is how we always do it so folks don't have to pay if they can't afford to but don't miss out). This activity book was such a hit that it even featured on Channel 4's Steps packed lunch where Kerry Katona tried to cut the queen's head off with a pair of scissors - this has gone down as one of my career highlights! On top of all this we were privileged to be one of the destinations for the Ashford Jubilee Tree Trail. Our tree was decorated by Tania Paige and included elements made by members of our yarn and sketchbook clubs.



Reclaim These Streets

A procession was held in Ashford led by a collective of female local councillors from across various parties, the Ashford safer streets coalition & members of the community united to loudly use our voices to reclaim our streets. We made banners which we held high, one banner built from our rage after the local discovery of Sarah Everard's body and the other crafted from sorrow after the murder of our local loved PSCO Julia James. It was a moving & important march.



Shop Small



We had a great day out in Margate for Holly Tucker's Shop

Independent campaign and met lots of other inspirational small Kent businesses.

Big Green Week

Our market manager got the chance to manage the market & get stall holders in collaboration with ABC for this brilliant event. This event saw the town packed with traders and organisations from e-cars in County Square to Asprie giving out free seeds at the Bandstand. It was a brilliant town event and we laid on some free make do & mend crafts, teaching basic sewing repair skills and how to make a draft excluder.

We also sold pre-loved craft supplies and fabric in the Craftship which became a permanent fixture.



Kent Mining Museum

During the Easter Holidays Melissa & Danielle ran community bunting workshops at the wonderful Kent Mining Museum in Betteshanger Country Park. Participants used posca pens, stencils, buttons and stitching to create over 20 meters of bunting to be displayed at the museum and remain as a legacy piece for people to enjoy for years to come. Some of the participants had family members who actually worked in the local mines!



Ashford 180

We collaborated to sell tickets, programs for them and posters, post cards too in Made in Ashford. We also put on a free day of train/180 themed free crafts in CS. We laid paper track all around the shop which could be coloured in, made junk model trains, tunnels, scenery and the kids made a train station, gift shop & café - we all had the best time!



Create Music Village Fringe



We hosted the beginnings of The Ashford Community Drumming Band or AC/DB as they are known! This was part of the Create music village fringe events and spring board. The band went on to perform on the bandstand and also played at the Carnival of The Baubles!

Keep warm & create

Introduced in response to the cost of living crisis so individuals & families can come into the Craftship sit down have a free colouring in sheet, do something creative & keep warm for a bit. No questions asked. Everyone is welcome.



Ashford COMMUNITY Lottery

Folks can play a lottery to win up to £20k and 60% of the £1 they spend on the ticket goes to us if they choose to support our social enterprise.

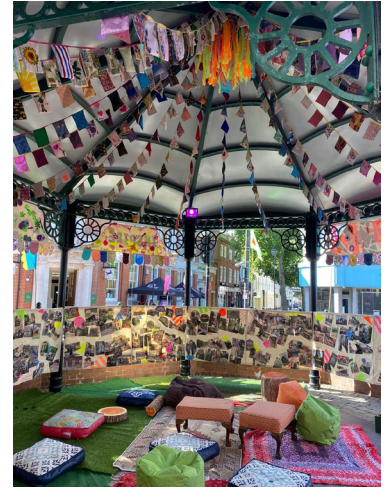
We have used this money to go towards free craft activities and our keep warm & create project for our local Ashford community.

Fabric of Ashford



This project was a collaboration between Craftship Enterprise, Revelation and Emergency Exit Arts for Love Ashford. The aim was to bring colour and community to the High Street by creating an installation for the town centre via other amazing venues in the borough such as Victoria Park, Singleton Environment Center and the bandstand. This consisted of photographs taken by the community of Ashford that were then worked through embroidery & paint pen to be transformed into a vision of future Ashford. We also worked with resettled Ukrainian & Afghan communities, WI groups, the Amber trust and more. These pieces were then worked into a collaborative installation that was put at the bandstand for the finale event. The Craftship hosted many of the workshops and our facilities such as sewing machines & makers space was used for free for the project's completion. We helped

create the concept for the project and 8 of our members were the paid freelance artists used on the project.



Carnival of the Baubles



Another year of the beloved Carnival of the Baubles with an out of this world space theme. We again hosted the open workshops, went into schools to create lanterns to be paraded with the children. We also worked on the large lanterns you will have seen in businesses & the parade. This was another collaboration with Emergency Exit Arts, Revelation for Love Ashford. Another 10 of our members worked on this project working with 2 EEA artists and we had a development session



to work on our big builds with Dream Safari. The procession was led by an EEA pink robot made from wheelie bins called Bin Bot which was very much enjoyed by all. St. Marys church was lit up and there was projection mapping on the old Bingo Hall.

It is the highlight of our year and gets better each time!



We went into **6** primary schools, **2** secondary schools, worked with **3** community groups, college students came to volunteer & help us (who were fantastic!) and had **4** open workshops at the Craftship. Over **2,000** people came to watch or join in the light procession.

We have collaborated with: AIMREC, ABC, Kippys, Revelation, Create music village, Emergency Exit Arts, Concept Training, Kent Mining Museum, and all 73 Made in Ashford business and artists we have worked with throughout the year

Thanks & Mentions

Thank you to you lot! Our customers, clients, participants, beneficiaries, grant funders, post readers, facebook likers, cheerleaders -

You are all a part of this and what we do. We care and love this town and we would not be here doing what we love without you all!

The amazing Made in Ashford tenants - As always you are only as good as your team and that is why we are AWESOME. Team Made in Ashford are just wonderful. So bright, happy & fun. Always willing to get stuck in and help. I love hanging out with these guys, they make happy! Thanks for that team! Also they make beautiful things which is how all of this works! They also believe in what we do which is so important.

Ashford Borough Council/Love Ashford team - It has been a tricky year on the inside but the team at ABC are always so helpful & just there, even when it is not always their job to be. Special shout out to Chris for keeping the creative train moving, Imogen for picking up on all of my emails and being so kind & helpful and Christina for working so hard in the background and doing all of the annoying MIA licences paper work! We appreciate you!

Danielle Williamson (Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC & Tinybeegle) - Super designer, super sketch book club leader, super artist and more. Thanks for all the car ride business meetings/business therapy sessions! You legend.

Charlotte North (E-commerce manager & Charlotte's Photography) - Thank you for being solid and knowing your roes inside out. I think you know our website inventory better than Shopify. Such great work again this year. Loving your photography & creative shots too!

Sue Jones (Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC & Mulberry Glass Art) - I haven't seen you as much as I would have liked this year as we have been all so busy but even so you keep managing the rota, doing the banking, putting in gorg windows and singing our praises to potential newbies. You are a safe and hard working pair of hands and I thank you so much for that.

Carla Richardson (Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC & Ellabee) - Carla Richardson (Co-Director Craftship Enterprise CIC & Ellabee) - Thank you for always being on the end of a message for me to chat through hair brained ideas & always be the voice of reason! We may not get to chat as much as we once did but I always know you are there and for that I appreciate you endlessly and the wisdom you provide.

Tina Allen (Keep it in a Frame) - Consistent, reliable, insanely organised. Thank you for knowing whats what & delivering so much for us. Also you are a lovely human & it is just wonderful having you as part of our organisation & our buddy!

Katy Morrison (Katy & The Bear) - Oh Katy, you are elevating us to the next level online by gifting us with your incredible photography talents. I am ever so thankful for all the effort you put in especially with our markets and how much your try to make our organisation successful! I am so proud of you too with your new market supreme manager life, it is a privilege to watch your business grow from your hard work, kindness & beautiful soul.

Debz (Pancake Pet) - A new superstar has emerged in the form of a Debz! Since joining the Craftship working team she has taken the bull by the horns taking on lots of in house clubs, doing private workshops & everything that has been thrown at her. She gets stuck in with a smile on her face. Her hard work & belief in what we are doing helps to drive all of us and our organisation as a whole. She has changed the Craftship in the best way. Thanks mate!

Della (Dellalicious Designs) - Thank you so much for going the extra mile and volunteering for us sorting craft donations.

Nadia (Teal Alien Crafts) - You have also been a legend & volunteered to sort craft donations. You are also my go to person for help with making tiny villages out of paper, or cricut help, or making felt leaves. You never tell me to do one and I appreciate that! Your crafting knowledge is immense, thank you for sharing it and being such a grafter.

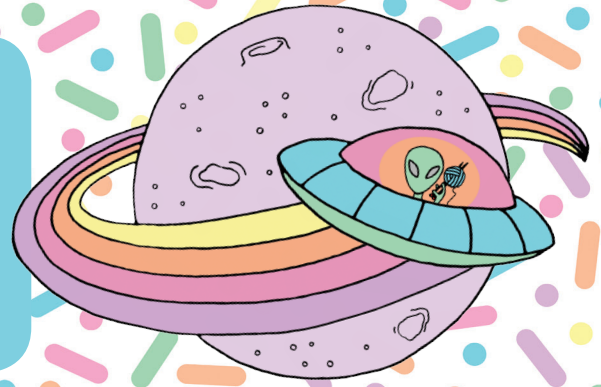
Holly P (Holly Pickersgill Art) - Thank you for volunteering to help with sorting craft donations, you were the quickest pricer ever!

Russell Wood - Thank you for coming to the shops after work and on your weekends moving stuff around, helping me with DIY tasks, cooking me dinner when I get home late and giving me all the hugs. It is not easy & Russell is probably the one who sees that the most.

Kim Dawkins (Melissa's mum) - Well mumma you have led your yarn club to be heavily featured in this report which is a massive success. Your gang of yarnstars have done so much charitable work this year it is incredible what you achieve in 1 morning a week. You then go on to volunteer to sort craft donations & price stuff for our scrap store for an afternoon each week. As well as all the other mum duties like regular phone calls (hr consultations I like to call them), childcare so I can go to work, lunches (super important) and proof reading at all hours! Thanks Mumra!

Funding Sources

We are extremely grateful to have the continued support of Ashford Borough Council. In 2022 we received further business support with CPG which was funded by ABC. Towards the end of the year we were awarded a digital grant to develop our online presence & e-commerce channels.



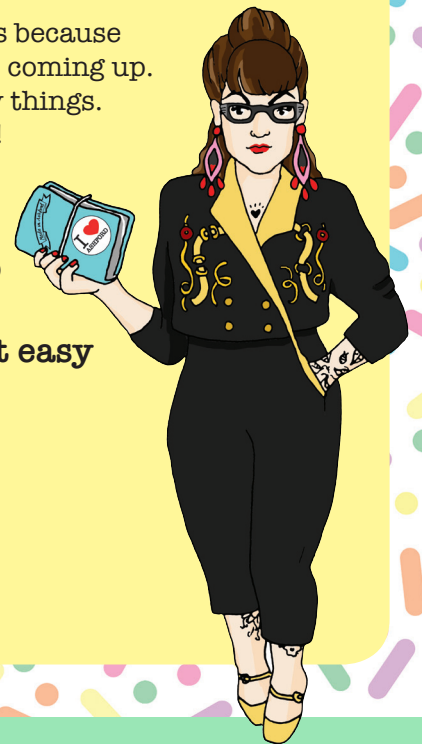
Made in Ashford and the Craftship are so much more than shops! We are a community and you ALL help to make us what we are. From the customers buying just a card to those who simply like our posts on social media, if you are there rooting for us, you are a part of all this and the good we can do!

"Coming here has changed our lives, after a long period of anxiety & depression it has given my daughter the creative outlet she needed and she feels like she belongs. This shop is like a multi coloured hug!"
- workshop participant 2022

I ❤️ ASHFORD

Craftship Enterprise CIC is not for profit and the money we generate is invested back into our goals of supporting creativity in the community and supporting creative business.

2023 is going to be a busy one! The reason this report is a little late year is because I have been in a month of meetings about all the amazing projects we have coming up. We have been awarded some grants and are getting involved with so many things. Ashford is going to be a creative explosion and we are the confetti cannon!



Thank you for reading our report.

This is for all our wonderful makers, creatives & artists who work so hard with such passion & love for our community to make all of the stuff that is in this report happen. It is not easy in Ashford and that is why it is so important!

Melissa Dawkins

- Founder Made in Ashford/The Craftship,
Co-director of Craftship Enterprise CIC
& Aye Aye.



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